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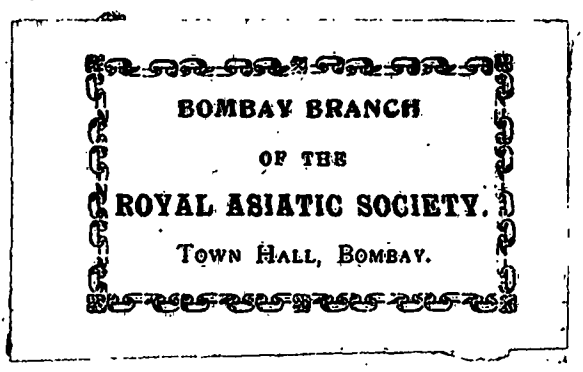

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BIOGRAPHIES AND PORTRAITS

OF SOME

CELEBRATED PEOPLE.

VOL. I.

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BIOGRAPHIES AND PORTRAITS

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CELEBRATED PEOPLE.

BY

ALFONSE DE LAMARTINE.

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LORD CHATHAM.
WILLIAM PITT.
SHAKSPEARE.

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LORD CHATHAM.

OF all the literary faculties of man, that which is most blended with action is political eloquence; this is why, amongst all men of letters, those whom history most often classes in the rank of great men are orators. A man is not great, in fact, for being simply a great philosopher, a great poet, a great writer; for these gifts or these talents of mind, although possessed in an eminent degree by the favourites of nature or of art, do not always presuppose the qualifications of soul, of character, of power over events, of public virtue, which constitute the great citizen, the great warrior, the great tribune, the great political counsellor of his country. But the political orator blends in the tribune his soul with his eloquence, his character with his speech, his genius as a statesman with his discourse, his patriotism with his ideas, and often even his blood with his opinions. In the writer there is but talent, —there is heroism in the great orator. To write is sim-

ply to write; but to speak is to act, to combat, to govern, sometimes to die.

And thus, by a just compensation, public opinion or fame exacts from the orator an infinitely less degree of literary perfection than they require from poets or writers. Men take into account, in the case of the orator, all the other faculties, of action, of character, of courage, which he throws into his discourse, and they have the more indulgence for his art of speaking, as they have more esteem or admiration for his action; the artist disappears before the man, the form fades before the substance, and, to employ a common expression, political eloquence is, of all the works of mind, that which most allows of mediocrity, or at least of negligence.

But if, by a rare coincidence of natural or acquired gifts, there happen to arise from time to time, or rather, every ten centuries, some few of those privileged beings who combine in themselves, like Demosthenes, Cicero, Mirabeau, Vergniaud, all the literary perfections of style with all the views of the statesman, all the passions of the citizen, all the energies of public action; then the master-work of a complete man is accomplished in them, to the admiration of all ages; men become enraptured with the supreme and literary beauty of spoken or written words, which is at the same time the supreme beauty of the action of man upon men, and they are proclaimed doubly great amongst the greatest, because they are not only great artists, but great citizens or great ministers of their country. Amongst all the moderns, in our opinion,

the man who most deserves to be placed in the rank of these sovereign masters of human speech is William Pitt, Earl of Chatham; the father of a son almost equal to himself, that other Pitt, to whom justice on our part is the more due from the fact that, in order to be the saviour of his country, he was, as he should have been, the great enemy of France. But let us first speak of the father, a man less perhaps as a statesman, but greater as an orator, than was his son.

To all who, like Cicero, Demosthenes, Solon, Mirabeau, have alternately exercised their talent of writing in solitude and their talent of speaking in the tribune, the master-work of human intelligence is incontestably political eloquence. One becomes staggered by the multiplicity of conditions, almost incompatible with each other, which must be combined in a man, at a given and not at a chosen moment, in order to speak worthily before assemblies of men, whether in the senate, surrounded with the imposing solemnity of an auditory, or in the public place, surrounded with the tumults, the fury, and the arms raised against one's head, of a multitude. Reflection and spontaneity, preparation and improvisation, the order necessitated in the disposition of arguments and the disorder imposed by unexpected interruptions, perfection of style with rapidity of utterance, the adaptation of the physiognomy and the gesture to the impassioned fire which kindles the blood, a musical sonorosity of tone with the civic indignation which oppresses the breast

and breaks the voice, the modesty which disarms men, and the daring which faces and subjugates them, supplication for one's cause or one's clients with dignity in one's self, the abundant flow of words which omits nothing, and the conciseness which resumes everything, simplicity in exposition and imagination which strikes and impresses, accumulation which crushes, passion which moves, peroration, that hymn of the speech, which converts the tribune into the tripos; lastly, if it be facing the stormy crowd, the intrepidity which can see daggers gleam, and prepare to give forth its last words with its last blood! the political orator is all this. Whoever descends from the parliamentary tribune or from the popular bench after having accomplished this phenomenon of intelligence and of human character, is in our eyes elevated above humanity; he is no longer a man, he is ten men in one! This is why parliamentary government, which has so many defects, and popular government, which has so many perils, are the governments which raise nations highest, because they exercise most powerfully these faculties of genius and of character, and give birth to these few men greater than nature, whom supreme difficulties cause to produce supreme miracles of eloquence. Lord Chatham was the first of these miraculous men in his country.

The situation of England at the period when Lord Chatham was born was most favourable to eloquence. Tragical revolutions had just overthrown the Stuarts,

raised the scaffold of Charles I., suppressed royalty, imposed the popular and military dictatorship of Cromwell, recalled the Stuarts for one reign through the treachery of Monk; lastly, expelled them for the second time, and substituted a conditional throne and a revolutionary dynasty more German than English. The nation was divided into three parties which, by the combination of their interests, gave to the parliamentary factions their strength; the royalists, partisans of the Stuarts, defeated but still conspiring; the tories, partisans also, but discouraged partisans of the Stuarts, resigned to the new dynasty provided the government preserved to them their aristocratic ascendency over the people; lastly, the whigs, or the more revolutionary and popular party, which affected a jealous zeal for the new royalty, in order through it to possess the privilege of power. These two last factions, equally distributed in the House of Lords and the House of Commons, were sometimes combating under oratorical chiefs for and against the ministries, sometimes coalescing to dispute to the king his prerogative, and to force him to submit to their domination. The most ordinary text of these oppositions was the assumed or real partiality of the kings for Hanover, their personal and hereditary possessions in Germany; a German and Hanoverian interest to which the patriotic orators accused the crown of sacrificing the interests, the policy, and the subsidies of England. A minister, skilful in managing these parties and in corrupting patriotism, Sir Robert Walpole, had ended by enervating these oppositions and by reducing these

great factions to intrigues. The influence of England abroad had become diminished proportionately to the abasement of its public character.

The national pride, exalted by Cromwell, was humiliated; the English colonies of America were beginning to manifest contempt for the mother country, and to refuse obedience to it. The English armies, drawn, in the interests of Hanover, into all the quarrels of Germany, and especially into those of Prussia against France, experienced the varied fortunes of their allies in the North, sometimes victorious without advantage, sometimes defeated with disgrace. The preservation of the electorate of Hanover, by the branch reigning over the three kingdoms, cost England more wars and more impolitic treaties than the interests and the glory of England herself would have cost a dynasty that might have possessed but one crown. Moreover, the opposition was constantly taking offence on account of the German troops which the king maintained and paid in England, and accusing the crown of wishing to intimidate or to enslave the nation by means of these foreign troops.

It was needful that a great man should be born to dominate at once the throne and parliament; it was necessary that this great man should be a patriot, to inspire the nation with confidence; it was necessary that he should be the enemy of factions, to serve the crown whilst restraining it; lastly, it was necessary that this great citizen should be a great orator, since all power was at that time parliamentary, and the strength of a man of parliament is in his speech. So

long as nations are not irremediably condemned to die, Providence always gives birth to the necessary man. It was then that William Pitt came into the world.

He was born at Westminster, on the 8th November, 1708. His family was illustrious through public employments and alliances with the noblest houses of the English aristocracy. His grandfather, Thomas Pitt, had governed some provinces in India. A diamond of immense size, which he had purchased of a Hindoo during his stay in India, and which he afterwards sold to the King of France at the price of two millions, had considerably augmented his fortune. That of the father of William Pitt was by no means in accordance with his birth. This father, who died when still young, left to his son only an annuity of one hundred guineas. The guardians of the child brought him up for the military profession, after he had studied for a short time at Eton; he entered the service with the commission of a cavalry officer. But the weakness of his constitution was an obstacle to his advancement in the army. Attacked from the age of sixteen by the gout, which was hereditary in his family, the young officer, often obliged to yield to the pain, deplored his precocious infirmity in solitude and in inaction. But his ardent spirit, which could ill brook the immobility of his body, avenged itself upon nature, by study and by the ceaseless perusal of books. He plunged especially into antiquity, that ceaseless source of ideas and examples; he there sought, amongst the poets, the

philosophers, the statesmen, the orators, what was most applicable to his country and to his times. He conjured up, with the force of a powerful imagination, the parts and the words which the great characters of Athens or of Rome would have played or spoken under the circumstances in which he himself was born. Demosthenes, Thucydides, Cicero, had become as familiar to him as the orators or the historians of his country. By dint of living in the solitary society of those great men of a distant period, he had himself become a man of antiquity in modern times. It is this assiduous and concentrated study of the genius of Athens and of Rome, which established, so to speak, the distance of centuries between his times and himself, which raised him by an involuntary but natural invitation to the elevation of thoughts and of language of those heroic periods of the human mind, and which for ever impressed upon his eloquence that manly diapason, literary, political, poetical, lofty, and somewhat tragical, the characteristic of his actions, his physiognomy, and his speeches. Clothe, in fact, Lord Chatham with the toga in lieu of a coat, make him speak Greek or Latin instead of English, and you have under your eyes an *ancient;* Demosthenes with greater virtue, Cicero with greater courage.

The rotten borough or fictitious corporation of Old Sarum, belonging, through the extinction of its inhabitants, to the Pitt family, elected him in 1735 as its representative in the House of Commons. He

there kept silence during nearly two years, out of respect for a talent that was ripening at leisure, and which he wished to show only in its strength. He maintained between the opposition and the ministry an impartiality which was bold in this period of party-spirit; he knew beforehand that superiority over governments and factions is to be obtained only by remaining isolated from their caprices. There are some neutralities which are weakness, there are others which are strength. Lord Chatham's, from the first day, was that of majesty. The corruptions of Robert Walpole, the popularities of the opposition, appeared to him equally degrading for his genius. He belonged too much to himself to give to any one the right of counting upon his vote or his speech. He seemed at once to despise Robert Walpole, his adulators, and his enemies. He broke his silence only upon a solemn occasion in which a third party, free from the meanness or the violence of the two others, allowed, and, so to speak, obliged him to express his views with manly independence.

It was on the occasion of the marriage of the heir to the throne with the princess of Gotha. This union, distasteful to the king and to the ministry, was celebrated by him with a freshness, a poetry, and a policy of speech which at once raised the orator to the lyrism of the tribune, the highest summit of his art. The Prince of Wales rewarded him for this defence of his love by the appointment of gentleman of the bedchamber in his personal court. The admiration of parliament, the favour of the patriots, the terror of

the ministers, suddenly raised his name. Never since Strafford, who died in expiation of his empire over a parliament, had such a voice resounded at Westminster. The vibration of his soul upon his nerves, like that of sound upon chords too tightly strung, was such that each harangue was to him an illness, and that he had to be as sparing of his speech as one might be of life. The two greatest poets of courts, Thomson and Hammond, celebrated the eloquence of the young William Pitt in their verses.

His *début* was an historical event in 1739; he again broke his silence on the occasion of a treaty, disapproved by the nation, which the government had just signed with Spain, to settle the differences of the two courts in regard to America. Robert Walpole and his corrupt majority could scarcely resist the energy and the patriotic indignation of William Pitt. The opposition, defeated in spite of this champion of its cause, withdrew in mass from the two Houses, abandoning the country to the mercy of the court. Pitt did not follow it in this retreat of vanquished or factious men; he, on the contrary, turned with independence against it, and reproached to it its flight as sedition or cowardice.

Robert Walpole, out of resentment for the speech of his antagonist, deprived him of the rank he held in the army.

The following year, 1740, he opposed, with an ever-increasing strength of talent, the harsh measures

demanded by the ministry to put in force the law relative to the *press-gang*, a forced enlistment which, in the civilization of a maritime people, reminds one of a state of barbarism. The minister, irritated by his harangue, having reproached him with the lofty tone and solemn eloquence which ill became a tyro in business and a young man, Pitt resumed his speech with reprisals of invective which redoubled the blow.

"I will not undertake to investigate," said he, "whether the youth of any one can be made a matter of reproach, but I will assert that a man loaded with years may render himself justly contemptible if he has allowed them to pass by without improvement, and if vice appears to predominate in his mind when the time of passions is past. The wretch who, after having seen the fatal consequences of his errors, continues to commit them, and in whom age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, does not deserve that his white hairs should protect him from insult. The man is still more to be abhorred who, as he advances in age, departs more and more from the paths of virtue, and becomes more corrupt as he becomes less subject to temptation; who prostitutes himself for money which he can no longer enjoy, and who devotes the remainder of his life to the ruin of his country. But youth is not my only crime; I am accused of having a theatrical declamation."

This personal anger, which the people attributed to the sacred anger of patriotism, increased to fanaticism the popularity of the orator. In public assemblies a

man often owes more to his passions than to his virtues; only, what is owed to passion is infatuation, what is owed to virtue is strength. Pitt triumphed over the government some time afterwards upon the question of subsidies for the German troops, which, according to his view, were equally ruinous to the treasury, the liberty, and the policy of England. The public passion which his harangues against the Hanoverian mercenaries excited in his favour was such that the Duchess of Marlborough bequeathed to him in dying the sum of sixteen thousand pounds, "on account," as she stated in her will, "of the noble disinterestedness he had shown in maintaining the laws and in preventing the ruin of his country."

The ministry of Robert Walpole fell beneath his speech. The Duke of Newcastle, of the ministerial family of the Pelhams, beloved by the king and less disagreeable to the people, became prime minister. He hastened to call William Pitt into the new administration, which could not become consolidated without such a support. Pitt was nominated member of the Council, Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and Paymaster-General of the army; official and lucrative appointments which, without giving the main direction of state matters, bound his opinions to those of the ministry. At the death of Pelham, the brother of the Duke of Newcastle and the particular friend of Pitt, the latter resigned all his appointments, from the fear of engaging his responsibility and his conscience by too much complaisance towards the crown. The Duke of Newcastle yielded too much, according to him, to

the partiality of King George II. for his German states. The Duke of Newcastle sought a support in Fox, the only orator capable of counterbalancing the credit and the eloquence of Pitt. Fox consented to join the new administration, and to defend it. These same two great names, who were to perpetuate, during two generations of orators, the greatest oratorical struggle of modern times, then began to measure themselves against each other in parliament; but, in this first period, the converse of the second, it is the name of Pitt which represented patriotic opposition, and the name of Fox which represented the royal prerogative and the system of government.

The first discussion upon the treaties concluded between the king and the powers in the north of Germany, for the protection of Hanover, commenced this grand duel. The speeches pronounced in the two houses of parliament had at that period no other publicity than that of the memory and the notes of those who listened to them. The annals of this eloquence were only in oral tradition, and it is alone by the impression it made that posterity can judge of the orators. We have thus but the vibrations and the fragments of the most sublime harangues pronounced in this heroic age of eloquence. But these vibrations are so strong, and these fragments so magnificent, that they suffice to the imagination and to history in rendering justice to the orator.

The following are the terms in which Horace Walpole, a man of classical intelligence, who was at that time in parliament, and who was not liable to the im-

putation of partiality for an opponent of his family, speaks of the speeches of Pitt upon the treaties.

"All these speeches served only to set off that which did not require to be set off by any contrast: I mean the harangue of Pitt. You should have heard his eloquence, like a torrent long restrained, gush forth with an impetuosity so much the greater. Proud and haughty, he had at once the consciousness of his wrongs and that of his superior talents. He complained in the first place of the use, so frequent and so contrary to parliamentary rules, which had been made of the sacred name of the king, and of the disloyalty in so using it. At one time, a member would have been called to the bar of the House on the first repetition of such an impropriety; but he perceived that for some time past no artifice was neglected to lower the dignity of the House: he had seen it failing and fading away; no one could feel more veneration than he did for the name he had made use of. . . . Up to that point he experienced no other sentiment, he did not complain of the man who had placed himself at the head of this measure. That man (Fox) appeared to him as yet deserving only of pity. He did not wish, he said, to follow all the vague arguments of the discussion. . . . Lost amidst the innumerable contradictions which he had just heard, he could only glance at the most remarkable arguments of the various orators. One of them had pretended, in a strange kind of way, it is true, that these mercenaries would constitute for us a body of reserve, in case our navy should be destroyed. 'What!' cried he, 'must we

then drain to the last drop of our blood to send it to the pole? If you wished to purchase succour of the Czarina, why, instead of troops, did you not ask her for ships? I will tell you: it is because ships would have been useless to Hanover. Under the reign of Charles II. what efforts were not made to obtain the fleets of Sweden and Denmark! Now, the natural system of Europe is reversed. I know not what a majority can do, but it seems to me that this one is like a stone tied round the necks of the ministers, which will drag them into the abyss, and with them the nation. We have been told, in sooth, that, of yore, Carthage and Spain were lost, in spite of their navy. I admit it; but it was only when they entered upon continental expeditions; and besides, Carthage had a Hannibal who wanted by all means to pass the Alps (an allusion to the duke). It has been said that we are bound to assist Hanover through justice and through gratitude. These expressions are unparliamentary and unconstitutional. The passage which contains them should be recalled and punished. Besides, is there in the speech any expression relating to Hanover which should call upon us for such a resolution? The noble lord who proposed the address seems to have been inspired by the powers that be. As for myself,' continued he, 'who am far from this holy of holies where the priest withdraws to receive inspiration from above; I who am travelling through a desert surrounded with gloomy mountains, I cannot so easily perceive a way which might cause one to distinguish the beauty of these negociations; but there are some

passages in this address which do not appear to proceed from the same source as the rest. I cannot fathom this mystery. . . .' Then, suddenly striking his forehead with his hand, he exclaimed: 'Yes! I feel myself inspired in my turn! the truth strikes me! I remember that when I was at Lyons I was taken to see the confluence of the Rhone and of the Saone; the latter a soft, weak, languid, and yet a shallow river; the other an impetuous torrent, terrible; they at length became united! . . . And may they long remain united for each other's welfare, and for the glory, the honour, and the safety of this nation!'

"After some arguments upon general policy, he continued thus: 'I flatter myself that this day will tinge my whole life; though I fear that nothing will be able to resist the torrent, I remember that imprudent measures created a ministry; may it not be possible that these subsidies may create another? I saw this ministry; it blossomed in a morning, at noon it was ripe, before night time it was gathered and forgotten. But it is said that the king would be dishonoured if these treaties were rejected; and was not the celebrated treaty of Hanover sent here, and was it not rejected here? If it be a preventive measure, it will prevent nothing but the departure of an individual. A coalition has been the consequence of it, and may it long endure. It has been sought to depict in pathetic colours the position of the king towards the close of his life; and I too can offer a pathetic picture of the position of his Majesty. I imagine him at a distance from every honest adviser, surrounded during

the summer with frightened Hanoverians, without having near him a single person willing to take up the defence of England. But, alas! we cannot alter the laws of nature, nor make Hanover otherwise than an open country.' He then drew a touching picture of the distress of England; and, using the same image which Murray had employed, he said, that he feared that the cries of a ruined people might within two years penetrate into the midst of Saint James's Palace, and there come to disturb the sleep of the king. He concluded by saying that we imitate the French in everything, excepting in the courage and the patriotism of their parliament. The French thought, and he was not far from sharing in their opinion, that we would have neither sufficient sense nor enough virtue to pause when it was necessary.

"This speech, accompanied with a noble gesture, a varied tone, touches of irony, and moreover, adorned with so much imagery and happy allusions, especially in the celebrated comparison of the Rhone and the Saone, an imagery with which were perhaps mingled one or two somewhat forced metaphors, lasted for an hour and a half, and was sustained with inimitable fire, although it was commenced only at one in the morning, and after attention had been tired out by a sitting of 10 hours. Every one suffered from the sittings being prolonged to such an advanced hour, important discussions scarcely ever commenced before three in the afternoon. Things came to such a pass that some of the great firms in the city were obliged to alter their hours for payment, which, instead of

being from 10 o'clock till noon, were fixed from noon to two o'clock."

This comparison of the confluence of the Saone and the Rhone, which in reality was but an epigrammatical allusion to the alliance between Fox and Newcastle, was, in the mouth of Pitt, set off by such a sonorous choice of words, such a vividness of imagery, and such a musical evidence of phrase, that it has dwelt in the memory of the English as a constantly quoted model of harmony and oratorical pomp. It cannot be dissimulated, however, that rhetoric and emphasis enter into it more largely than meaning, and that such a phrase, pronounced in our days in the French tribune, would have won for the orator perhaps the applause of the ear, and the contempt of the intellect. But it will equally be acknowledged that the seduction and fascination of the ear constitute a component part of spoken eloquence, and that harmony holds a position in oratory like sound in human language.

This same topic of discussion continued during several months to supply William Pitt with the most powerful arguments, and tremendous apostrophes, with which any English orator up to his time had yet shaken the roofs of Westminster.

THE misfortune of representative governments is that popularity, that passionate and often unintelligent counterpoise of policy, always sides with the opposition against the government, and that, especially in

questions of foreign policy, the eloquent opposition weakens by all its eloquence the national action, represented, under republics, by the executive power, and, under kings, by the ministers. This popularity caused William Pitt to triumph over the German plans of the Duke of Newcastle and of George II. But now that the time of continental struggles has arrived for England, it is more than doubtful whether the English opposition of 1754, represented by the eloquence of Pitt, was in the right, against the German policy of King George II. and his minister. Who can deny that if England, by its treaties, by its alliances in Holland, in Prussia, in Hesse, in Saxony, and elsewhere, had founded a kind of British confederation in Germany, she would have been infinitely stronger against France from 1793 to 1804, and that she was infinitely better armed in our days through her alliance with France against Russia?

But the first Pitt, in lending his voice to the opposition of 1754, saw only the waste of certain English subsidies in the north of the Continent, and aimed only at the passionate applause of an English patriotism which was then as narrow as its island. No parliamentary orator is always able to rise above the general passion shown by his country, and, if he were, this orator would be without echo, and consequently without force, like Cato at Rome, or like Vergniaud in the Convention.

However this may be, the falling off of the Ameri-

can colonies, the reverses of the English fleet in the Mediterranean, under Admiral Byng, the loss of the island of Minorca, taken by the French under the mute cannon of Byng, forced the Duke of Newcastle to yield to the call of opinion. He resigned the ministry to William Pitt in 1756. Embarrassed during this first ministry by the presence, in the Council, of Fox and of the partisans of the Duke of Newcastle, and by the necessity of humouring the king in his passion for Hanover, Pitt, ill and discouraged before action, felt that real power escaped from him at the moment when it seemed placed in his hands.

His enemies in parliament caused to be voted an inquiry into the ministry of the Duke of Newcastle, in which Pitt would be obliged, in taking one side or the other, either to wound the king by accusing his former counsellors, or to disown his speeches in the opposition by defending the former ministry; his painful infirmity had kept him for six months from attending the House of Commons.

The promoters of the inquiry were triumphing in his absence and in his silence. When the day for the discussion had arrived, it was thought, says the annalist of parliament, that Pitt, profiting by his illness, would not appear at the House. But he disdained this stale artifice, he feigned to neglect the care of a precarious health, now that his country had need of his services; and, in token of the sincerity with which he entered into this examination, he appeared at the discussion in the studied costume of a comedian playing the part of an invalid. The season was extraor-

dinarily warm for the season of the year, which did not prevent him from wearing an old coat and a waistcoat of beaver, adorned with gold lace, with an overcoat having the right sleeve lined with fur, and fastened with black ribbons, as if to show that he could not raise his arm for the purpose of inserting it. This arm was moreover supported in a crape scarf; but unfortunately, in the warmth of discussion, he withdrew it, and used it, as was usual with him, in gesticulation. He wore leather gaiters; in a word, never did a cardinal aspiring to the tiara act the sick man with a more specious weakness. This masquerade was hidden beneath an apparent frankness. He acquiesced without difficulty in all the mitigating conditions proposed by the advocates of the accused. His sense of justice trembled at the bare idea of a personality. Moderation was, according to him, the only virtue of a censor. He acknowledged that, in regard to the loss of Minorca, it was the whole government whom he accused, and the whole government could not be punished. The second day, it is true, he was somewhat deficient in this virtue of moderation, and threatened the majority to make known to the world to what extent had been carried its iniquity; but soon remembering that the majority could be infinitely more useful to him than the world, he resumed his *sang-froid*, and contented himself with making the majority responsible for the defects which the public might find in the judgment which the House was about to render.

The former ministry was acquitted by a small majority. Pitt and his friends retired; the government

fell into an interregnum of several days. The Duke of Newcastle attempted to form a ministry with Fox. Pitt again became by his resignation the idol of the patriots. The weakness of the ministry and the voice of opinion obliged the king to compromise with Pitt, and, on the 29th June, 1757, to nominate him prime minister. This supreme direction of a cabinet had until then never been given in England to a minister. The people saw in this elevation its victory and its reign; Pitt had subjugated the king. He did not abuse his ascendency over the crown. It may even be observed that never did England, until then timid in its intervention in Germany, throw into that country more subsidies and more armies, to create at that point a diversion to the successes of the French in America. The confidence of the patriots in Pitt excused everything. The abasement of the country under the last ministries had humiliated the people even unto shame. Pitt resolved to raise its pride by his energetic action abroad. The great Frederick fought for him during the most glorious portion of his life. Quebec and the whole of Canada fell into the power of the English through the heroism of Wolfe, who died in the hour of his victory. British patriotism became personified during three years of triumph in its prime minister. The words of Pitt gave greater majesty to the English supremacy. The people felt itself elevated by the eloquence and the heroism of a single man.

It is curious to see in what terms Horace Walpole, the most detracting writer in the opposition of his

period, speaks of this great man in his Secret Memoirs of the Reign of George II. It is sometimes through the mouth of an enemy that one may judge of a statesman.

"Pitt, at the commencement of 1758, had at length arrived at the point of possessing without trouble that influence in public affairs which had been the aim of his ambition, and which in his presumption he had flattered himself he could exercise like those men of superior genius which Providence sometimes sends into the world to save a nation on the brink of a precipice. He had the previous year said to the Duke of Devonshire: 'My Lord, I am sure that I can save this country, and that I alone can do so.' There would be injustice in not acknowledging that he again brought into our enervated councils a force which visibly changed our fortunes. He deferred the hour which appeared to be approaching. He inspired vigour to our armies; he taught the nation again to speak to foreign peoples in its accustomed language; and, far from fearing the invasion of the French, he affected to threaten them with invasion themselves." In point of fact, his endeavours towards this object were so weak, so badly combined, so inefficacious, that France regarded them only with contempt, that Europe considered them ridiculous, and that humanity groaned at the men they cost, and at the example they gave to France of a more cruel manner of carrying on war than had until then been practised. "The fact is that Pitt was far from possessing all the talents which he believed himself to have, or even those which he

appeared to have through the absence of superior men around him. In the course of my life Heaven has been sparing, very sparing, of great men. I can, at the very most, boast of having seen but five; the Duke of Cumberland, Sir Robert Walpole, Lord Grenville, Lord Mansfield, and Pitt. I have described at length the character of each of them, and yet I cannot resist saying a few words more in order to compare them together. It is by showing the same personages under several different points of view that one may best flatter one's self of having made them known.

"Lord Grenville was the greatest genius amongst these live men. He conceived, he knew, he expressed anything he wished. The situation of Europe and that of literature were equally familiar to him. His eloquence was rapid, and sustained by wit, dignity, and learning. Far from being premeditated, he did not allow reflection to polish it. Sometimes gay, sometimes sublime, sometimes full of hyperbola, sometimes of ridicule, it followed the torrent of ideas which occurred to him. He could embrace systems as a legislator, but he was incapable of dwelling upon the details which engage the magistrate. Sir Robert Walpole offered in many points the contrary qualities; he knew mankind and not their writings; he consulted their interests and not their systems; he desired their happiness and not their glory. He despised everything that went beyond simple good sense. Lord Mansfield, without having the elevation of Lord Grenville, possessed nevertheless a vast eloquence. His mind was singularly exact, which did not

prevent him from shining in all things to which he chose to give his attention. He had as few vices as Pitt; he was more simple, and he often knew how to convince after Pitt had dazzled. The Duke of Cumberland had an infinite amount of understanding; but there was so great a connection between his understanding and his sensitiveness, that it was necessary to mortify his pride before he could be made to exhibit all the strength of his judgment. Placed at the head of the armies before having had the least apprenticeship in the art of war, it is not surprising that he should have failed; it is cruel indeed to have no other master but one's own faults! The greatness of Pitt was in some degree imperfect; when it is considered that it depended in great measure upon his words, one may almost call it an artificial greatness. But his passion for glory and the breadth of his ideas made up for his defects. He aspired to avenge the honour of his country, and to place it in a position to dictate to other nations. His ambition was to be the greatest man of the first country in Europe; and he thought that glory could not be tarnished by the irregular path followed to obtain it. He desired to elevate England in general, but without thinking of obliging or of doing good to individuals. One loved Lord Grenville up to the moment when one knew him; Sir Robert Walpole, the more one knew him; one would have loved the duke if one could have ceased to fear him. Pitt loved the dignity of despotism; Lord Mansfield, its reality; the latter would nevertheless have consented to serve the cause of power without sharing in

it; Pitt would have given liberty to the world, if he had been required to give up commanding in it; Lord Grenville would have preferred being just, if he had not found it his advantage to be unjust. Sir Robert desired to benefit the human race, although he did not ignore how little it deserved it, and this principle is the most virtuous in itself and in regard to the world."

Making due allowance for the family enmity against Pitt, and for a kindred partiality towards Robert Walpole, one may perceive the gigantic idea which Horace Walpole conceived of the statesman whose portrait he thus framed amongst the four greatest characters of his century.

THE ministerial voice of Pitt had gained in authority what it may have lost in public favour. We find at each session, in the parliamentary notes of the time, confused indications nevertheless strongly impressed with the memory of this voice.

"Parliament assembled on the 15th October. Beckford, by a high-flown eulogy of Mr Pitt, afforded an opportunity to this minister of giving an exposition of his position, and of ours. Pitt managed this very adroitly, attributing no merit to himself, but accounting for our successes in such a manner that no one but himself could lay claim to any credit in respect to them. He did not wish, he said, for any personal praise, and he declared that he was resolved to remain united with the rest of the ministers. He could boast

only of his faithfulness and his diligence, although his ill health had not allowed him to devote himself to business with as much assiduity as he could have wished. Not a week had passed, during the whole summer, without offering for him a crisis during which he did not know whether he should be abused, or praised as he had just been by Mr Beckford. The more a man became versed in business, the more was he in a position to perceive everywhere the finger of Providence. It was our success which had caused our unanimity, and not unanimity our successes. As for himself, however, he would not at any other time have been so daring. Other ministers had had as good intentions as himself, but they had not, like him, had the advantage of popularity. (This was flattering for the other ministers, but tended to cause all the credit to be attributed to himself alone.) By dint of rolling the stone, they had almost reached the summit of the mountain; but it might fall back again with fearful rapidity. A moment of weakness in the battle-field, or in the cabinet, might overthrow everything, for chance had no existence, *it was but an inexplicable term given to nothing.* Providence was everything, and it was through virtue that its favour was to be deserved. It was necessary to support our allies; if a single wheel became clogged the whole machine might be brought to a stand-still. Relinquishing the error of his youth, he no longer thought that England in all cases could suffice to herself. (This was an indirect excuse for having embraced the German system; and what he says afterwards, on the subject of the descent,

was perhaps only a clever way of soliciting an augmentation of troops which he might subsequently send abroad.) *Those who had never been subject to panics would probably not be afraid at that moment.* He said that the army of Prince Ferdinand consisted of 60,000 effective men; but France would, on the following year, have 100,000; was then Prince Ferdinand as strong as he ought to be? He was desirous that they should find him 10,000 men more; he thought that France had the intention of making a descent; but the attempt did not appear to him dangerous even if it took place. He directed his attention equally upon land-owners and capitalists; he had no preference for the latter over the others, but he thought that we should show greater consideration for them, in proportion as the public credit became less firm. He ended by saying a few words on peace. Every one might offer him advice relative to the mode of carrying on war; but who would venture to sketch the plan of a peace that would satisfy all parties? He would eagerly seize the first moment when it might be possible to make peace, though he desired to be able to end his ministry with the war. This conclusion seemed to come from his heart; perhaps it escaped him in spite of himself. No one knew better than he did how to say what he wished, but no one also, in commencing a speech, knew less what he was going to say."

His eloquence, say the same notes, in relation to the panegyric upon General Wolfe, which he pronounced in a low and plaintive tone, like Mirabeau

when he announced the death of Franklin, his eloquence was too natural to be able to accommodate itself to any plan prepared beforehand. The comparisons which he drew from Greek and Roman history served only to weaken what was touching in the subject itself. Mr Pitt had done more for England than any Roman orator did for the republic; our three last campaigns had brought us more land than the Romans conquered in a century. The gloomy darkness of the night, the precipice scaled by Wolfe, the vast country he won for England with a handful of men, but, above all, the glorious catastrophe which made the last day of his life the first of his glory, all this combined renders the episode of the death of Wolfe superior to all that ancient history can offer, and places it beyond the reach of a vain philosophy.

Academical speech, in Pitt as in every innate orator, weakened his spontaneous expression. The lava has its heat only in bursting from its fiery source. Improvisators alone are eloquent at the time, harangues of words are only so on the next day. Pitt was the man of the day for extemporaneous eloquence, the man of the morrow by poetry of speech, the man of all times by the depth and the extent of his ideas.

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The death of King George II., in 1760, seemed to suspend, but not to interrupt, these triumphs of the patriot minister. He possessed England, for he possessed both the good opinion of the aristocracy, by his proud independence of the court, and the good opinion

of the people by the satisfaction which he had given abroad to the national pride. He had taken England at the lowest ebb of her fortunes, he had raised her to the zenith of her power; his policy reigned no less abroad than his eloquence at home. The new king, whom Pitt had always shielded against the disfavour of his father, placed his reign in his hands with full confidence. Pitt was desirous of closing the long war with France by a glorious peace, which might leave him at liberty to pacify the colonies of America, already agitated by the first throes of independence. The negociations, however, did not interrupt hostilities. The conquest of Belle-Ile, by the English, indefinitely postponed peace. The *family Pact*, signed without the knowledge of Pitt between France and Spain, appeared to him a declaration of war on the part of this last power. He did not hesitate to strike a great blow before the Spanish monarchy could have time to avoid it. He proposed to the Council the seizure of the Spanish fleet before it had returned to its ports. This measure, too decisive for a new Council where already secretly prevailed the timid policy of Lord Bute, the favourite of the princess royal, now become queen, was adjourned by the king. The prime minister, convinced that decision and promptitude were the only two measures that could meet the perils of the country, peremptorily refused to accept before his country the responsibility of inaction. The respect and the enthusiasm of England followed him in his retirement. The genius and the good-fortune of the nation seemed to leave the Council with him. The king

honoured his firmness whilst perhaps congratulating himself upon the voluntary withdrawal of a minister too great and too imperious. He bestowed upon him a pension of £2600, reverting after his death to his wife and eldest son. The tears of gratitude with which Lord Chatham received the thanks and the gifts of the crown were bitterly reproached to him by the orators and the pamphleteers of the opposition. Party-spirit, which has in its nature neither patriotism, nor propriety, nor moderation, would have required Lord Chatham at once to turn against the crown that genius and that eloquence which had saved the nation. Chatham, too much above them to obey his own party, gloried in these insults, and found more true dignity in independence than in the opposition. There is always the appearance and the odium of desertion in those ministers who leave the councils of a king to direct his enemies against the policy of the crown.

These selfish coalitions, of which in our times we have seen melancholy examples, are never formed without perverting men, without outraging kings, without undermining governments. Absence and silence are, on these occasions, the moral and political law for ministers out of favour. A dignified retirement preserves these men for their prince and for their country; they should keep at a distance from the state mysteries, with which they have been connected too closely to allow them to divulge. Their opposition looks like delations and ingratitude, and their hostility like treachery. Lord Chatham thus understood the

true patriotism of his part; his absence from the Council appeared to him sufficiently to indicate the refusal of his consent to the new policy of the king. Retained in his retirement by his increasing infirmity and by respect for his post, he quitted it only after several years of complete solitude. Events had but too well vindicated his foresight: it was not long before Spain attacked England at every point. After three years of struggles, in which the naval forces prepared by Lord Chatham saved the English possessions and predominance in the American and European seas, the ministry of Lord Bute concluded, according to Chatham, with too little advantage, the treaty of peace of 1762. Lord Chatham spoke with majesty, but with moderation, against the ratification of the preliminaries. The parliament, under the subjection of Lord Bute, listened to him with deference, but voted the treaties; Lord Bute, weakened in public opinion by the absence of vigour in his policy, begged of Lord Chatham to resume, under his ministry, the direction of foreign affairs. Several state conferences between the two adversaries, who, in the interests of the country, made to each other a sacrifice of all rivality, ended only in a mutual esteem.

Chatham disappeared more than ever from the scene during two more years, passed in physical suffering, his historical studies, and the cares of bringing up his family. He was moulding one of his sons, the second and perhaps the greatest of this race of statesmen, as the aristocratic patriot who was one day to bear the brunt of Europe in league against his country.

A question of internal liberty for the third time drew Lord Chatham from his silence.

The House was discussing the exceptional law which authorized the government to violate the abode of writers accused of offences relating to the press. Chatham, though often wounded by this arm of publicity and of calumny, felt that liberty, even abusive, was the soul of British patriotism. He opposed this law, as the destruction of one of the bases of the Constitution; speech was in him too powerful to fear speech in others. The home of the citizen seemed to him to form part of his very person. To violate the threshold was in his eyes to degrade the man himself. His harangue, of which we have unfortunately only shreds retained by the memory of the auditory, equalled, it is said, the grandeur and the sacredness of the social edifice from which the ministry were striving to remove one of the foundation-stones.

"By such laws," cried he, in commencing the peroration of his speech, "the most innocent man may be made to fear for his life, whilst, in the magnanimous acceptation of the English constitution, the house of every English citizen is in itself a fortress, without requiring to be surrounded with walls or retrenchments. It may be built of reeds and roofed with thatch," continued he, evoking in his eloquence all the poetry of his nature, "it may be open to every gust of air, all the winds of heaven may beat upon it, the rain and the snow may enter it; all the elements of nature may have access to it! But the king cannot! No, the king would not dare! . . ."

This magnificent defial of the unconstitutional power of the king and of the public force in a constitutional land remained for ever the definition at once proverbial, legal, and poetical of the English home; and what rendered this definition more classical is that the man from whose lips it proceeded had governed his country during fifteen years without feeling it necessary to violate a single letter of this constitution.

In recognition of this proclamation of the civil security of every English citizen, Sir William Pynsent, an enthusiastic admirer of the eloquence of Lord Chatham, bequeathed to him all his goods. This was the second time that private admiration thus endowed public genius. Such a country might well give birth to great devotions through gratitude as others give birth to them through ingratitude. It is more grateful to be a great patriot in England, it was finer to be one at Rome. Reward diminishes virtue.

That of Chatham was, in 1766, rewarded afresh by the second ministry of this Statesman; *the great commoner* who had never wished to become a Lord, in order that he might speak and act nearer to the people, was named Earl of Chatham, and took his seat in the Upper House. It is thought that he accepted this rank because his age and his infirmities rendered him less adapted to the tumultuous discussions of the House of Commons. The high point of view which he took, and the independence of court and parties which he

had known how to preserve intact, allowed him to form a ministry of coalition, or rather a patriotic co-operation for the public good. Such coalitions, to save or to strengthen the shaken state, are an honour to men of party. Coalitions to overthrow a common adversary are their disgrace: when parties coalesce for their country they do so with loyalty; when they coalesce for their personal vengeance, they equivocate and dishonour themselves. The factions in parliament blamed Lord Chatham for this coalition; history makes it one of his claims to glory. To govern is sometimes to combat, but it is oftener to reconcile. His name was great enough to include all in one.

Lord Chatham, in his second ministry, was less the voice and the action of the government than its thought. He stood in the shadow of the council as the high-priest in the sanctuary. His infirmity, exasperated by old age, by the contention of a long life, by the feverish emotions of such an eloquence, often confined him during whole years upon his bed of pain. His name and his shadow governed the parliament. He reproved even his colleagues in those measures which his political infallibility caused him to consider dangerous to the future of the nation. Thus, in 1768, he energetically opposed, in an unexpected and prophetic harangue, the taxes which the parliament and the king wished to impose upon the American colonies.

"We should be the gratuitous tutors, and not the

oppressive masters of our great colonies, said he in recapitulating his ideas. Their taxes are the lands which they populate, and the nations which they civilize to the honour of England and to the benefit of humanity. You will preserve them only by being their providence! Your tax is in the commerce which you carry on with your colonies!" Defeated in this disinterested and far-seeing policy, he handed in his demission as keeper of the seals, and absented himself more and more from the House of Lords. He wished thus to reserve to himself the right of combating the fatal counsels which hastened the rising of English America against the mother country. It may be doubted whether a more tolerant policy would have much deferred the emancipation of the Americans. Ingratitude and sometimes parricide is in the nature of colonies. The swarm forgets the hive whence it has proceeded.

Independence is the law of corporations strong enough to stand alone; whenever we do not wish it to be conquered we should bestow it. In his policy relative to America, Chatham was only half way towards the truth. He did not wish for revolt, and he could not conceive independence; he hoped that patriotism might always continue English beyond the Atlantic. His moderation might have postponed the birth of the new world, he could not have avoided it. It was neither a filial sentiment, nor virtuous sentiment, nor chivalrous honour that was the soul of America; it was luxury, commerce, independence. To appeal to America through a sentiment was the dream of a

generous patriot like Chatham, it was not the thought of a statesman. The discussions upon America are the only ones in which we find, in the harangues of Chatham, something uncertain, contradictory, and chimerical, which sounds eloquently in its notes, but which sounds hollow in the mind, a characteristic of the eloquence of opposition.

In 1778 France recognized, out of hostility towards England, the American nationality, which as yet was only a civil insurrection; the House of Lords at length concerted measures with the ministry to break off the alliance between the Anglo-Americans and the French by granting to America through desperation that independence which it had not granted through policy. The Duke of Richmond brought forward a motion to declare this independence complete, on condition that the Americans should undertake to combat with the English, their fathers, against the French, their accomplices in the insurrection. This motion, too long deferred, humiliating, but necessary, raised in the patriotic soul of the old orator all the indignation and despair that could be kindled by his country, the aristocracy, the national policy, the hatred against France, and the decay of England, now dismembered by the hands of her continental enemy. To consent to one's own degradation appeared, to the minister of the national pride, more desperate than to suffer it perforce; one may recover from misfortune, one cannot recover from shame and abdication. The extremity

in which his country was placed, tore Chatham from his bed of pain, upon which his neuralgic gout had during seven months bound him, motionless in body, convulsive in mind. His family in vain attempted to dissuade him from a supreme effort in which his life might escape him with his words. *Speak or die,* or *speak and die,* was the old man's only answer. He believed he owed to his country this last triumph, or this last example, or this last sigh.

Dressed with the habitual magnificence of costume which was wont to set off the intellectual beauty of his face and the majesty of his attitude, but with his legs enveloped up to the waist in flannels and furs, he dragged himself to his seat in the House, supported on one side by Lord Mahon, his son-in-law, and on the other by William Pitt, his second son and the inheritor of his soul; all the Lords rose on his appearance, with involuntary respect, and formed for the veteran of eloquence a hedge and an escort of honour to his seat, so long left empty amongst them. They seemed to expect from this great man, who during twenty-two years had counterbalanced and vanquished ill-fortune, either a burst of wisdom capable of showing a path through the impossible, or one last illumination of genius which at least might give lustre to England's grief.

When the Duke of Richmond had developed his motion, Lord Chatham, in whose presence no one would have asked permission to speak, rose, and, in a

voice which still preserved the accent of his palmy days, struggling against the gloom of his thought and the weakness of his body: "My Lords," said he, "I have to-day made an effort, far above my strength, to be amongst you (doubtless for the last time), in order that I may express my indignation against the proposal to recognize the sovereignty of America. I rejoice, my Lords, that the tomb has not yet closed over me, that I am still alive to raise my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and noble monarchy. Overwhelmed beneath the weight of infirmities, I am little able to help my country in this perilous juncture; but, my Lords, so long as I preserve feeling and memory, I will never consent to deprive the House of Brunswick of its finest inheritance. Where is the man who would dare to propose such a step? My Lords, his Majesty succeeded to an empire the extent of which is as vast as its reputation is intact. Shall we tarnish the lustre of this nation by ignominiously abandoning its rights and its finest possessions? Must this great kingdom, which has survived in its integrity the depredations of the Danes, the invasions of the Scotch, and the conquest of the Normans, which resisted the formidable invasions of the Spanish Armada, now fall prostrate before the house of Bourbon? Certainly, my Lords, this nation is not what it used to be! Can a people, seventeen years ago the terror of the world, be now fallen so low as to be forced to say to its inveterate enemy: Take all we possess, and give us only peace. It is impossible. I am not, I admit, well informed as to the resources of the king-

dom; but I am confident they are sufficient to maintain its rights. Any condition is preferable to despair; let us make yet another effort, and, if we are to fail, let us at least fail like a great people!"

He again seated himself after these supreme words, and his colleague and friend, Lord Temple, was seen to bend towards his ear, to remind him that he had forgotten to speak of the project they had agreed to lay before the House. This was to name the Duke of Brunswick Generalissimo of the Anglo-German army, on the sole condition that they should preserve the English flag, and that the acts of the American government should continue to be nominally invested with the authority of the king of England. This was a concession which would have been acceptable seven years previously, but which was then too late and almost derisive. Lord Chatham suffered the punishment of his delay in recognizing the necessity which saves those who anticipate it, which ruins those who await it! "No," said he to Lord Temple, "I have not forgotten it, I will do so presently," in replying to the Duke of Richmond.

The Duke of Richmond in fact supported his proposition in terms which seemed calculated to induce Lord Chatham himself to propose what he might consider most safe and honourable under the circumstances. "If any one," said he, in concluding his speech, "could obviate the painful necessity under which we are placed, Lord Chatham would undoubtedly be the man from whom we might hope for everything;

but what are the means which this great statesman may have to propose to us?"

Lord Chatham, thus called upon again to speak, rose to reply; but whether it was that his strength, over-excited and exhausted by his first harangue, was not equal to his will, or whether, at the last moment, the emptiness and the humiliation of the proposal he had to make stopped on his lips, and sent back to his breast with pain and death the words he had to speak, he opened his lips in vain, pressed his hand to his heart, turned pale, and staggered like a man stricken with a mortal faintness. The Duke of Cumberland, uncle to the king, and Lord Temple, his friend, caught him senseless in their arms; the Lords rose and hastened around the dying man; the House was cleared out of respect for the last breaths of a great man expiring on the breach made in his country. The attentions of his son, his son-in-law, and his friends at length recalled him to life; he was borne away, like a man wounded in the defeat of his country, to his house in Kent, not far from London. He there received the tender care of his family and the respects of England, but he died on the 12th of May, 1778, less from age and illness than from the dismemberment of his native country.

England, it should be stated to her honour, did not wait for the last sighs of Chatham to feel that the loftiest soul in the nation had passed away with her greatest voice. She has generous patriots because she is a generous country! The House of Commons listened

with tears to the panegyric of *the great commoner;* it voted him public mourning and public funerals; it acknowledged in solemn deliberation that Lord Chatham, in giving his exclusive attention to public matters, had neglected his own fortune, and that his estate was insufficient to allow his children to bear worthily the name and the rank of this statesman. A sum of nearly £40,000 was set aside for the payment of his debts; an hereditary pension of £4000 was divided between his children. His tomb was raised, at the expense of the nation, in the necropolis of kings and of illustrious Englishmen, at Westminster Abbey. His memory, the ever-living echo of his voice, thrills like an immortal sound above all the voices of the two English Houses.

His words died with him, but the renown of his eloquence was imperishable. Tradition was his monument, regret added a further prestige. The remains left of this man seem to surpass the proportions of humanity; these remains, in our opinion, do not deceive the imagination; nature in him is prodigal. Upon the fragments which remain of his harangues, one might build up ten orators; five only can be compared with him: Demosthenes, Cicero, Mirabeau, Vergniaud, and Bossuet; Demosthenes, who surpasses him in argument, does not equal him in ejaculation; Cicero, who surpasses him in polish, does not equal him in force; Mirabeau, who surpasses him in solidity, does not equal him in colour; Vergniaud, who surpasses him in abundance, does not equal him in imagery; lastly, Bossuet, who surpasses him in lyrism,

does not equal him in suddenness of inspiration. These five superiorities in a single man, over the five greatest in our centuries, constitute a personal and definite superiority which has no longer any term of comparison. Chatham is no longer Chatham: he is the orator, he is the patriot, he is the philosopher, he is the colourist, he is the musician, he is the poet, he is the inspired, he is the Plato, the Homer, the Pindar of political eloquence. And his first claim is to have raised the discussion of public affairs to the literary and classical sublimity of art, it is to have inaugurated the beautiful in politics.

WILLIAM PITT.

IN reading and especially in writing the life of William Pitt, the greatest of modern statesmen, not only of England but of Europe, it is in the first place necessary that a Frenchman should forget his nationality; this is the bounden duty of the historian. He can be truthful only by being just, he can be just only by being impartial. Patriotism is a partiality, a necessary and sacred partiality when the object in view is to defend or to serve one's country, a pitiable and false partiality when one has to judge, in their local and relative position, of great men who, after their death, are of no party, but belong to posterity.

Let no one expect, therefore, to find here a trace of the national antipathies, the prejudices, the defamations, the calumnies, and the invectives with which the publicists under the republic of 1793, and under Napoleon, sought during 30 years to asperse the name of the saviour of England and of Europe;

their object was patriotism, ours is history. War is ended, hatred is forgotten, the celebrated antagonist of conquering France can no longer work either good or harm to our country; it is a grand spectacle to see France herself proclaiming over his tomb the genius and the virtues of her great enemy. This is our view of history, it is the view that is taken by posterity. In the pages of Plutarch names are not classed according to their nationalities, but according to their greatness; Hannibal there reposes in peace by the side of Fabius or of Scipio; Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians, Persians, Macedonians, Gauls, Germans, Numidians, have there no longer any country save their deeds, no other preference but their name.

But before entering upon this history of a statesman, let us first state what a statesman is; for there are as many kinds of statesmen as there are of forms of government in the world. Lycurgus or Solon, who ponder upon the relations of man to man, and from whose meditations proceed codes of laws adapted to the times, and to the manners of nations, are statesmen of the first order, the legislators of peoples. Mahomet, pontiff and warrior, confessing the unity of God in the midst of an idolatrous race, civilizing, combating, writing a Koran, the code of his faith, regulating the civil law, and founding a nation in order to wrest the East from the idolatry and shameful superstitions of a plurality of gods, and conquer it to the one God, is a statesman. The emperor Charlemagne,

sweeping, with a horde of barbarians, Italy, the prey of other barbarians, making the Church the soul of the empire, and thus perpetuating civilization by an organized Christianity, is a statesman. The orators of the Greek republics, debating public affairs before the sovereign people, like Demosthenes or Pericles, and determining those resolutions, those decrees, in peace or in war, on which depends the public weal, are statesmen. The consuls, the dictators of Rome, who resume constitutionally in themselves the powers of the state, and who consecutively govern the Roman republic or the Roman world, are statesmen. The instruments of absolute power, viziers in the East, ministers in Europe, like Richelieu or Mazarin in France, to whom kings, by indolence, by incapacity, or by majesty, depute the exercise of their authority, and who govern their kingdoms in the name of these princes, are statesmen. The tribunes of the people who, in revolutions or popular governments, rouse or allay the people by the power of speech, by persuasion, by courage, by popularity, who inspire it with crime or with virtue, with madness or with wisdom, such as Cromwell, Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Marat, Danton, Robespierre, are statesmen; some as sublime as reason and liberty, others as detestable as insanity and demagogy.

Lastly, under constitutional monarchies, the prime ministers, a kind of complex viziers, who at once hold their power from the king who nominates them, and from the public assemblies who may dismiss them by refusing the consent of a majority to their actions, are

statesmen. Of all the statesmen we have indicated, with the exception of the tribunes, who derive their mission from themselves, these constitutional ministers are certainly those who have the greatest need of eminent and various faculties in order to govern nations. It is necessary that they should be devoted to the king, in order that the king may with complete security invest them with their immense power; they must be popular, in order that the people may not mistrust in them the bestowal of the confidence of the king; they must have a political reputation above suspicion and venality, that they may preserve the constitution, which limits their action, from all conspiracy and corruption, even conspiracy and corruption in the interest of the maintenance of their power, or to minister to their pride; they must possess a thorough knowledge of the whole system of laws and of internal administration, in order to move with regularity the complicated machinery of home government; they must possess, by instinct and thorough study, the political genius to establish or to break off abroad, at the proper moment of time, the external relations of their country, in peace or in war, with rival or with allied nations; they must possess public virtue, which is nothing but private virtue enlarged in a great mind to the proportions of the human race, *caritas generis humani!* Lastly, with all these qualifications, almost impossible to be united in a single man, the very nature of representative government, which admits of the opposition of one or more rostrums always full of uproar, contradictions, and accusations, necessitates

another condition altogether independent of the foregoing; a natural gift which was refused even to Solon and to Moses, an accident, a fortunate casualty of physical organization, eloquence! The constitution of representative governments demands in fact that ministers should justify beforehand to the nation, by means of speech, all their actions; that they should discuss public matters with and against all the orators of the nation; that they should answer questions, reproaches, accusations, and often even abuse; that they should give a reason for everything, and constantly unfold, *vivâ voce*, with an apparent sincerity which must nevertheless be combined with a prudent reserve, the closest secrets of the state in its intercourse with neighbouring states.

It will readily be understood that this oratorical function of a minister, constantly called upon and constantly ready to answer, always commanding and yet always polished, ever open and yet ever reserved, continually attacked and yet continually patient, must be the most difficult kind of eloquence, a true challenge to human nature. That is nevertheless the completive condition without which there can be no statesman, minister of his country, under a representative government. Place Moses the stammerer or Lycurgus the mute in the tribune, and the phenomenon of representative government disappears, for want of volubility in the most accomplished of statesmen. It is the vice of this fine description of government, that it disowns genius if not endowed with abundance and force in speech, it places words above thoughts; to excel in

this kind of government, it is necessary equally to cultivate sense and sound. A man must learn to think aloud; in such a government literature becomes embodied with politics.

These considerations have for their object only to lead to a right appreciation of the eminence of the great statesman whose life we are about to narrate.

William Pitt, son of the Earl of Chatham, the great orator and minister whose history we have given elsewhere, was born at London the 8th of May, 1759. His mother was a daughter of the illustrious house of Grenville, one of those aristocratic and political houses which, like the consular families of Rome, gave from generation to generation the same names to the great councils of the State. The Earl of Chatham, at the period when this second son was born, was prime minister, in the zenith of his credit with the king and with the people. The cradle of William Pitt was the cabinet of a minister, he came into the world, so to speak, in a political atmosphere. It should be remembered here, in order to understand the future life of this child, that he was born and also brought up in the midst of patriotism. Lord Chatham, his father, was not a court favourite raised by the patronage of a king to the supreme ministerial power in his country, he was a loyal and eloquent patriot, saddened by the humiliations and the disasters of his native land, who had thundered in the assembly of the people against the abasement of England, against the favouritism of

the king, had overthrown the corrupting minister, and conquered his place by the breach made in the heart of the king. This king, George II., of the house of Brunswick, more German than English, was a man of sense, but obstinate in his predilection for his Hanoverian States. Lord Chatham, in the eyes of England, represented an English party in a German court. Here is the secret of that passionate favour of the people, who supported this great minister less for his incomparable eloquence than for his patriotism. It was almost an opposition to the government in the very Privy Council of the king. It will be easily imagined that in such a house the young Pitt must early have acquired a proud independence of courts, the manly liberty of an English citizen, and a serious inclination of mind towards free, though monarchical, institutions.

Lord Chatham perceived, from the earliest youth of his second son, that this child would inherit his genius and continue his name. He himself brought him up as much for politics as for life. As soon as the child had attained the age of reason, Lord Chatham admitted him, as a born confidant, intimately into his secret thoughts and public life. Thinking, speaking, deliberating aloud, before his son, who listened and who saw him live, was the education he gave to the child. To this domestic education the father caused to be added, only by carefully chosen masters, the classical studies of Greek, Latin, and ancient and modern history, which the engagements and infirmities of Lord Chatham did not allow him himself to superintend; but on his return from the Council or from the House

of Commons, with his mind still quivering from the speeches he had made or the advice he had tendered to the crown, he would, so to speak, rehearse his own magnificent eloquence; he delighted to consult with the child, as though he had been on the same level with himself, upon the state measures which he had supported, upon the substance and the expression of the speeches he had pronounced, upon his elocution, and even upon his gestures in the tribune; he thus prematurely drew the attention of his pupil to state matters, and to the modes of persuading or of subduing public assemblies. The infancy of William Pitt was but a course of human wisdom, of politics and of eloquence. Flattered by this condescension of so great a father, who seemed to consult him as a friend, the child had in reality no childhood; he played with questions of state as did the young Athenians with ossicles. His physiognomy, though childlike and feminine, acquired before its time the expression of thought and of maturity.

"The correspondence of Lord Chatham," says the author of one of the most luminous essays on the parliamentary history of England, M. de Vielcastel, to whom we are indebted for all the substance of this great scene filled by the second Pitt,—"the correspondence of Lord Chatham contains numerous traces of the tender and enlightened solicitude with which this great man watched over the education of a son whose precocious faculties filled his heart with joy and hope.

He loved to develop those faculties by encouraging him to express himself freely upon all the questions that were argued in his presence, thus obliging him to reason, to ripen his opinions.

"At the age of fourteen he was sent to the University of Cambridge, where he was placed under the direction of Dr Prettyman, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln. There he spent several years, and was distinguished by the regularity of his conduct, as well as by his sustained application and his success. He had not yet attained his 19th year when he lost his father, who left him but a very moderate fortune. He at first seemed inclined to embrace the profession of the bar, and during a whole session he followed with much assiduity the Western assizes. An address which he pronounced at this period excited the admiration of the illustrious Lord Mansfield, who expressed it to him in very warm terms.

"Whether Pitt had frequented the bar in order merely to better prepare himself for the career to which he was called no less by his own inclinations than by paternal traditions, or whether he became quickly tired of it, he soon gave himself up exclusively to the chances of a parliamentary life. Already for some time past he had regularly attended the debates in both Houses, studying, in the language of the principal orators, the art of composition, and the means of acting upon an auditory; he belonged also to a reunion, where a large number of young men, who afterwards played an important part, were practising the art of public speaking, and already he had been able

to obtain amongst them that incontestable superiority which he preserved upon another stage. Wilberforce, with whom, amongst his young competitors, he contracted the most intimate and durable friendship, has left us in his Memoirs some interesting details upon this short period in the life of Pitt. He shows him to us, when as yet he was a stranger to the active politics which were soon to absorb him for ever, occasionally indulging, with all the vivacity of his age, in sallies full of wit and originality, which were the delight of this little circle. At other times, especially when some stranger was present, he appeared cold and reserved. It was remarked also that, even when he seemed most animated, never an idea or a word escaped him which prudence might have wished to recall. At one time a taste for gambling appeared to seize him, but, as soon as he perceived that this taste threatened to grow upon him, he threw it off completely."

WILLIAM PITT was 19 years of age when his father, who had retired from office two years previously, and who was retained by his infirmities upon a bed of suffering, wished, so to speak, to yield his last breath at the House of Lords, protesting even unto death against his country's decay. Chatham appeared, in fact, at the House of Lords, leaning upon the arm of his son, like the angry phantom of the ancient grandeur of Britain, as though he wished himself to present to parliament and to the nation the

inheritor of his soul, who was to replace him. We know how, after a last harangue, in which his strength was unequal to his patriotism, he fell fainting and dying into the arms of his son. This solemn and tragical scene, which moved all Europe, must have produced upon the soul of Pitt an impression which could not be effaced. The bench in the House of Lords, where his father died, struggling for the dignity of his country as on a battle-field, ever seemed to him exalted and consecrated by the image of that dying father. After having wept for him with the tenderness of a child and the piety of a disciple, he thought only how he might replace him.

In aristocratic countries alone can illustrious fathers thus predestinate their sons to succeed them upon the scene of state business and of eloquence, when nature, by a rare chance, accumulates two great men in two generations. All the fortune that Lord Chatham left to his second son was his genius, and an allowance sufficient to maintain him. The title and the moderate estates of the family passed with the peerage to the eldest son. "I congratulate myself," used often to say the son disinherited by the law of his family, "my brother has only to take his place in the House of Lords; I shall have to conquer mine in the House of Commons, and to render it worthy of my father's name; the task will be difficult, and on that account more meritorious if I succeed; do not think of me, think of my brothers and sisters; I want no fortune but that of my country!" In such sentiments, at such an age, there was the tone of that Greek and

Roman antiquity amidst which Lord Chatham had brought up his son from the cradle.

LEFT at 19 years of age without any other guide but his father's memory, William Pitt devoted the two years prior to his coming of age to the assiduous cultivation of eloquence. Nature had not endowed him with thunders; but it had given him logic, ease and clearness in expression, improvisation, elegance, quickness, exposition, repartee, and, in a higher degree than to his father himself, the oratorical style, so naturally literary that the most spontaneous words falling from his lips became pages. Lord Chatham would perhaps have been more tribune-like before a whole people. The people is moved only by the great explosions of the soul, and the heart bared by nature in face of the multitude, which is itself an element of convulsion; his son was already more an orator of discussion and government, before those chosen assemblies who have the time to exercise their ear, and to study the artist beneath the orator. He spoke as men breathe, it was impossible to distinguish his expression from his thought; but he thought in terms as choice, as technical, as literary as the style of Thucydides or of Cicero, by which his diction had been nourished.

HIS appearance heightened the *prestige* of this innate perfection of language; his favourite niece,

Lady Hester Stanhope, with whom, in the leisure of her solitude at Mount Libanon, we have conversed at some length about him, and a perfectly preserved portrait of Pitt at 22, which we have under our eyes as we write, enable us to recompose his likeness with exactitude. His figure was tall and slender, his arms long, as suits an orator whose gesture they ennoble; his costume, which consisted of a blue coat with gilt buttons, attested an elegance habitual but not studied; his face, of an oblong and regular oval, had not yet been refined either by struggles or by anxious vigils; the cheeks had the bloom, the transparency, and so to speak, the virginity of adolescence; one might see that there a pure blood circulated beneath the skin; the delicately-chiselled mouth, well opened in speaking and freshly-coloured at the lips, bore the stamp of a frankness which conceals nothing; the eye, blue, large, serene, moist, seemed to give as well as receive light; the eyes of a woman have not greater fluidity in their rays; the eyebrows, well arched, but placed rather high, alone revealed a natural pride which might become transformed, in anger, into a certain disdain of the vulgar; the forehead springing slightly forward like the side of an antique vase; the hair, of a light blond, slightly powdered according to the strange fashion of the time, was in such abundance, so fine, and so waving about the temples, that it reminded one of that of a woman. The general impression is that of a handsome young man, not yet touched by the feverish and mephitic breath of assemblies, and in whom the graceful strength

of adolescence struggles against the precocious gravity of the novice in state affairs.

Such is exactly the handsome portrait of the younger Pitt, translated from the colour into words, and transported from the canvas to the page. Thus also he lived, though matured by some few years, in the memory of his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope.

THE retirement of Lord Chatham, and the accession to power of Lord North, a well-intentioned man, but possessed of little capacity, had in two years caused public affairs to fall into that condition of decay from which nations only recover with a shock which sometimes overturns governments. America was seceding; France, Spain, and Holland were holding out their hands to encourage her to independence; Russia, Sweden, Denmark, were forming a maritime coalition to overthrow the naval supremacy of Great Britain; Ireland, a country imperfectly united to England, was, as usual, disturbing the mother-country by its agitations. The prime minister, Lord North, bore the undeserved responsibility of the misfortunes of the times; by relinquishing America he dishonoured England; by seeking to subdue and to retain it, he exhausted the finances, the fleets, and the armies; by resisting the league in the north of Europe, he created new enemies to England; by yielding to these powers, he abdicated the naval monopoly of the English upon the seas: everything was peril, humiliation, or reproach for his government. A feeble majority, with-

out eloquence or independence, imperfectly supported him with its votes; a formidable opposition, composed of all the men of talent and ambition who desired to wash their hands of the public calamities, crushed him with its irony and invectives in both Houses; but in the conclusions arrived at in those discourses, the sorrowing nation could perceive only more sonorous impossibilities. A man was wanted. When nations are not irremediably condemned to perish, it rarely happens that such a man does not arise. He was sought in vain everywhere, they were far from suspecting him in a boy who had scarcely ended his studies at the university of Cambridge, but young Pitt could foresee him in himself.

According to the custom in England, where the same family sometimes possesses several boroughs which in course of time have become depopulated, but which, by an abuse, preserve the right of returning a member to Parliament, Pitt was elected when he was twenty-one. His father's name was his candidateship; respect for his father gave him a place, when he took his seat in the House, amongst the members who combated the ruined policy of Lord North. The celebrated Burke, already a veteran in the assemblies that he fascinated by a prophetic eloquence, and the young Fox, a disciple of Burke, soon to become equal to his master, were the two great voices of public anger. Pitt, a thousand times superior to them in attainments and in political tact, but inferior in years, disciplined himself under those chiefs in the parliament. Their party was called the party of the Whigs,

or the patriotic and liberal party in England. Burke, Fox, Sheridan, artists superior in words to all the others, but whose fault it was always to be artists and rarely statesmen; Windham, Erskine, the two Grenvilles, related to Pitt through his mother, who was their aunt, formed this camp of the Whigs, the most eminent reunion of orators that chance or patriotism has ever brought together in an ancient senate or in a modern assembly. There are seasons in humanity when the earth, long sterile previously, long exhausted afterwards, bears suddenly, and all at once, more superior men than would be required to render ten centuries illustrious. This was the season of public men in England, which ended with Chatham, Burke, Sheridan, Erskine, Fox, and Pitt. Where are they at this day? France had the same blossoming of public genius with Mirabeau, Danton, Maury, Vergniaud, and those who emulated them, from 1789 to 1840. Will they arise again?

THE first speech of a young orator of the name of Pitt, heralded in the House by the *prestige* of his father's name, was looked forward to as a public event. It not only surpassed the general anticipation, it confounded it. The assembly, at first incredulous in regard to the prodigy which for some days past had been announced to it, then attentive, then charmed, then moved, then struck dumb with astonishment and admiration by that voice which conjured up, whilst transforming it, the voice of his father,

thought they were listening to the oracle of political wisdom and consummate eloquence, in the words which came from the lips of a youth. All applauded, a great number melted into tears. "This boy," cried Burke, "will be greater than his father: the party with which he sides will be, if not master of the situation, at least master of public opinion."

Pitt, by natural cleverness as well as by a modesty which was becoming to his age, made the House wait for a long time before he again spoke after this triumph. He broke this silence only towards the close of the session, in order to strike a blow which was felt long after the debate had ended. The ministry was to be called upon to justify the measures it had taken in regard to the American colonies; some reproached it with its violence, others with its forbearance; the true cause of complaint was its want of success. The hour of the independence of America had come, it was easier to deplore this separation than to defer it. The opposition stultified itself by its contradictory accusations, the ministers armed themselves for their justification with the authority of the great Lord Chatham, the father of Pitt, who had died in protesting against the ignominy of allowing his country to suffer this dismemberment.

Pitt, thus challenged by the name and the opinion of his father, rose in order to justify his memory and at the same time to accuse the ministry of having wrongly interpreted the traditions of the great man, under which they sought to shield themselves. He traced his causes of complaint to the war itself which

the government had commenced against British America.

"As for myself," said he in concluding, and in evoking also with a modest reticence his family claims in regard to the question in hand,—"as for myself, faithful to the traditions of my father, I consider that war to have been conceived in injustice, born and nourished in folly; that in America, proscription, blood, and devastation have marked all its progress, and that, by a deplorable reaction, it has not inflicted lesser evils upon our unhappy country, exhausted of men and money, and ruined in its vital strength. And what have we obtained at the price of such sacrifices? Nothing but a succession of serious defeats, and inefficacious victories which are almost equally deplorable, since those victories are nothing but temporary successes obtained over brothers devoted by us to humiliation and destruction, over men who, amidst immense difficulties and almost without resources, have struggled gloriously for the sacred cause of liberty. Should we not equally lament such triumphs and such reverses? On whatever side we may cast our eyes, what do we see? Natural and powerful enemies, and pretended friends without warmth, without even sincerity, who perhaps equally rejoice in our misfortunes, and look forward to our ultimate ruin! Still greater woes are impending, if we persist in such a system." The effect of this vehement harangue, of which the main features only have been preserved, appears to have been very great. Applause arose from every part of the House. Fox, in his enthusiasm, exclaimed

that he no longer regretted the loss of Lord Chatham, since he saw him revived in his son with all his virtues and all his genius. One of the members of the administration, Henry Dundas, Lord Advocate of Scotland, who was at a later period to become one of Pitt's most constant allies, undertook to reply to him. Preluding in some measure, in this very refutation, to the relations which were soon to become established between them, he prophetically congratulated England upon the immense services which would some day be rendered to her by the young orator, in whom were seen united, in marvellous admixture, talents of the first order, eloquence so persuasive, and so high an integrity. A letter of Wilberforce, written at the same period, expresses a foresight no less precise and no less surprising. "Pitt," it is there stated, "commences like his father, as an accomplished orator, and I have no doubt but that I shall see him, some day or other, the first man of the country."*

The reverses of the English in America, in 1781, and the humiliating treaty which followed in consequence, brought Mr Pitt back to the assault with greater strength at the commencement of the following session. His youth carried him even into invectives against Lord North. "The ministers," cried he in one of his harangues, "are agreed only on one point, the ruin of the nation! I tremble that they may accomplish this ruin before the vengeance of the people strikes them, and God grant that the hour of retribution may not be so delayed that the august

* *Essai d'Histoire Parlementaire*, by M. de Vielcastel.

family of our kings, innocent of their crimes, be included in the chastisement!"

Fox, outbidding his young rival in invective, demanded the head of Lord North. Pitt often bitterly regretted in his life as a statesman, when blamed with public calamities, having set the deplorable example of outrage against men, instead of justice and of moderation in disapprobation. The only crime of Lord North was the greatness of America and the maturity of liberty in the new world. Pitt himself was destined, like his father, to yield to the necessity of this dismemberment, which the concessions of Lord North retarded instead of advancing. But popular passion, that partial justice of orators, applauded in young Pitt its own excesses.

Lord North, shaken by these repeated blows, resigned in March, 1782. Under a prime minister more violent than capable, the Duke of Rockingham, the whole opposition threw itself upon all the ministerial places of which in England the government is composed. Rockingham, Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Shelburne, Lord Camden, the Grenvilles, were ministers in spite of the king, incapable of stemming the torrent of public opinion. The young Pitt, who more than any one had opened the breach through which the opposition came into power, did not desire a place in the ministry for himself. Whether from a precocious and prophetic instinct of the futility of the systematic opposition to the conduct of public business, from prudent consideration towards the king, whom he did not wish personally to offend by forcing himself for-

ward, or from a feeling that his youth would not appear to the country sufficiently ripe to do credit to his policy, he remained an independent observer in the ranks of the patriots in the House of Commons; during this short ministry of men of words rather than of action, he appeared solely to study how he could best prove before the people that he had inherited the four or five great principles of his father, Lord Chatham: true national representation in elections enlarged to the proportions of every right and of all the political classes of citizens; religious liberty accorded, not as a concession, but as a sacred property, to Ireland and to Roman Catholics; the suppression of the sacrilegious traffic in negroes known under the name of the slave-trade; the representation in parliament of the sovereignty, regulated, but real and efficacious, of the nation; the venerated foundations of the constitution raised not above but to the level of the throne; in a word, all the doctrines at once manly and respectful which formed the groundwork of English liberalism in the great Whig party, sprung from the revolution of 1688: the man, the citizen, the subject.

In this session of 1782, he spoke only to promulgate his doctrines in magnificent harangues: it was the popular philosophy of his future politics; it seemed to be his object to establish deeply and firmly in the opinion of the English people the main roots by which he consolidated himself against shifting winds, and which were to supply for the rest of his life the sap necessary for his high political destinies. Each of his

speeches was a monument of durable and wholesome popularity. In parliament he constantly failed; but his object was not to carry votes, he aimed higher, he desired to conquer beforehand that favour which clings from afar to great prospective truths. He placed himself in the distance before the aspirations and the progress of his time, as a man as clairvoyant as he was young; he declared himself of the party of the future, and he ranged beforehand this party of the future at his back.

We have no fear in affirming that the superficial writers who have considered these liberal speeches of Mr Pitt, in 1782, as faults of his youth, do not reach the level of his thought. These pretended faults were a plan calmly premeditated in his mind. He was imbued with the patriotic traditions of his father; he was one day to derive from this philosophic popularity, which he accumulated upon his name, a credit with the people equal to his credit with the aristocracy, and the strength to uphold the throne, not upon prejudices, but on rational and national institutions. Such was Pitt in 1782. The best proof that he did not venture beyond his politics is that when in office he never disowned the noble maxims which he had thrown behind his path when in the opposition. He might choose his time and furl his sails in the storm, but he travelled always towards the same goal.

THE death of the Duke of Rockingham, who held together the divers elements of the ministry, occasioned

the breaking up of the cabinet. Fox, a vehement and unruly spirit, would not submit to the direction of Lord Shelburne, upon whom the king bestowed the place of the deceased prime minister. Burke, a vacillating mind, Sheridan, a disorderly mind, and all the other eloquent members of the Rockingham ministry, tendered their resignation in order to return to the opposition, the true element for their turbulence. Masters of power and of principles, since they governed, they gave up principles and power out of a puerile humour against the name of a man who did not satisfy their vanity. Pitt, solicited at 22 years of age to lend his name and his talent to the Shelburne ministry, formed by the urgent necessity to shelter the crown abandoned by its counsellors, accepted without hesitation a ministerial department. He was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. Public opinion was grateful to him for this premature elevation, which appeared like self-devotion. Nations have no love for those who desert the government.

Fox lost by his desertion a portion of public favour. He sought to excuse himself, on the occasion of the first debate, by confessing that his only motive was his repugnance to serve under Lord Shelburne: Pitt, who until then had treated him with consideration as an idol of eloquence and of popularity, did not hesitate to attack him in his vulnerable point, he crushed him in his culpable vanity. "Man," exclaimed he, "who would teach by your example to sacrifice principles to ambition; born an open enemy of all power which is not your own!" Fox came wounded out of this first

struggle. Burke, in spite of the prestige of age and the solemnity of his invective, equally succumbed under the measured but intrepid reply of the young minister. The bitterness of their defeat drove Fox, Burke, Sheridan, and their friends, to an act most shameful for public men—to a coalition with their natural enemies. Fox, who during 10 years had branded the policy of Lord North, and who had demanded his head, concluded out of revenge an alliance with the minister who had fallen beneath his attacks. Either this alliance was an apostasy or this coalition was a falsehood: in any case it was ignominious for Fox. But power was only to be obtained at this price.

The coalition was sealed in 1783. Burke and Sheridan did not blush to ratify it by their adhesion to Lord North. Pitt in vain upheld against all these united groups a decimated majority in the two Houses. The coalition concerted a combined attack against the treaty of peace concluded with America. The same voices, which during 10 years had incriminated war, now censured peace; the usual logic of Fox, to whom any text was good so long as it was bitter to his enemies. Pitt equalled Burke in greatness of considerations, Sheridan in sarcasm, Fox in vehemence; he surpassed them all in sincerity and in magnanimity of expression. He seemed to rise above himself in demanding of his enemies grace for his country, pity for its wounds, silence upon its reverses. His last speech on behalf of peace is that of a patriot philosopher more than of an angry politician.

"The ministers thus surrounded with a mass of ruins," said he, "could they pretend to dictate the terms of peace? Can it be seriously that its articles are compared with those of the treaty of Paris? Doubtless, there was a time when Great Britain was in a position to treat with her enemies on other conditions, and if an imagination impressed with the recollection of the grandeur and the glory of this country could have been allowed to lead away any of the members of the Council from the painful appreciation of the truth, I might, without presumption, I hope, have claimed a right to this indulgence. I remember at this moment, gentlemen, how much I was touched, in my childhood, by the accounts of the triumphs of England. . . . I learned from the lips of one whose memory I shall always revere, that at the conclusion of a war very different from the present one, she dictated the conditions of peace to subjugated nations. That period, to which I attach something more than a common interest, was the memorable epoch of England's glory. But that time is past: she is reduced to the sad and mortifying necessity of adopting a language more suited to her actual position. The dreams of her pre-eminence and of her ascendency have faded away.

"We have recognized, it is said, the independence of America. . . . This was, gentlemen, a superfluous formality. The incapacity of the noble Lord who directed our councils, Lord North, the events of the war, and even a vote of this House, had already granted what it was impossible to refuse.

"We have ceded Florida. . . . We have obtained Providence and the Bahama Islands.

"We have granted the right of fishing over a certain extent of the banks of Newfoundland. . . . We have reserved to ourselves an exclusive right over the most advantageous portion.

"We have relinquished Saint Lucia and abandoned Tobago. . . . We have recovered Granada, Saint Dominique, Saint Christopher, Nevis, Montserrat, and we have saved Jamaica from an imminent peril. In Africa, we have ceded Gorea, the tomb of our compatriots, and we retain Senegambia, the best and most healthy establishment.

"In Europe, we have given up Minorca, a possession which cost us enormous and useless expenses in time of peace, and which was never tenable in case of war.

"We have also allowed His Most Christian Majesty to repair the port of Dunkerque. . . . The humiliating clause for the destruction of this port had been stipulated after other wars than the present one. But the immense expenditure which the repairs would necessitate render this concession useless. To this it should be added that Dunkerque first became for us a subject of jealousy at a period when vessels were constructed of much smaller dimensions than at present. This port at the commencement of the war could admit only one-deckers: no art and no expense could bring it into a condition to receive men-of-war.

"In the East Indies, which alone offered us the means of compensation to obtain this peace, we have restored what was of no value to ourselves, and what

we could hardly have preserved in the event of hostilities being continued.

"Yes, such are the ruinous conditions to which our country, at war with four powerful states, exhausted in her resources, has thought it necessary to subscribe in order to dissolve this alliance and immediately to obtain the blessings of peace. Let us examine what remains with a manly and intrepid courage. Let us fortify ourselves against ancient enemies, and become reconciled with old friends. The misfortunes of individuals or of nations, when looked at in the face and measured with calm wisdom, are more than half redeemed. It is towards this great object that all the efforts and all the abilities of this House should be directed. Let us have the sentiment of our disgraces, but let us know also to bear them like men."

The ambitious men coalesced against Shelburne and Pitt would not be disarmed. The House abandoned these ministers; Shelburne resigned into the hands of the king, who, left without any possible ministry, talked of leaving England to her anarchy, and retiring to Hanover. Pitt dissuaded him from a retreat which would have been equivalent to an abdication; he devoted himself to bear alone the weight of the provisional government, whilst the king sought to re-awaken patriotism in the soul of a few statesmen bold enough to face the coalition of Fox, Burke, and Lord North. The coalition itself sought to come into power under the Duke of Portland, the favourite of the king. Pitt,

solicited in vain to take his place beside his recent adversaries, resigned his functions into their hands. He did not consider, like Fox, that politics could dispense with honour. His tact in relation to events, in spite of his inexperience, foretold to him the brief duration of these coalitions formed in bad faith, dissolved by antipathy. He despised them as manœuvres of hatred which may sap but can never establish. He returned with his integrity into silence. So long as a man like him is intact, nothing is lost in his fortune. The faults of the ambitious are the providence of patriots.

Pitt fell back upon those permanent principles which had made him so dear to the people, and which sustained him, in his isolation from party, against the desertion of the majority and the disdain of the coalition. He looked forward to the ruin of Fox at the hands of Fox himself. A man having so little respect for his own principles and for his own invectives that he could consent to govern his country with the party of Lord North, upon which he had heaped deadly outrage during ten years, could not long survive such a degradation of his character. In political assemblies, as in the popular forum, scandals sometimes triumph, but never last.

Pitt was certain that the coalition bore in the very apostasies of which it was formed the rapid germ of its own decomposition; this is why he had advised the king not to oppose it by prematurely dissolving the parliament and by appealing to the country, but to place the government in the hands of Fox, North, Burke, and Sheridan as an expiation for the shameful

alliances which these politicians had entered into, in order to overcome him.

This challenge to govern, thrown to the coalition of these turbulent and incompatible men of ambition, was the most skilful as well as the most legitimate revenge. An honest Machiavelli would not have advised differently a constitutional prince vanquished by the disloyal manœuvres of a parliamentary faction. This single action, when he was but 24 years old, manifested in Pitt an infallibility of foresight beyond his age.

History repeats itself; the same circumstances, the same ambitions, the same vices, the same false positions, the same alliances without sympathy between incompatible parliamentary factions, in order to destroy an open enemy, are represented at intervals of a few years and at a few steps of distance in other representative countries. The situation of Pitt, in 1783, reminds one of the parliamentary coalition between the chiefs of opposed parties, impatient to overthrow in order that they might rule, which disconcerted the parliament and lost the monarchy of 1830.

Mr Pitt availed himself of this short interval of leisure to visit France. This journey, described by Wilberforce, the friend and companion of Pitt in this excursion, was attended with some of those strange meetings which chance sometimes delights to bring about in early life between men who are destined to meet each other at a later period in public life. We

leave M. de Vielcastel to relate the first interview between Pitt and M. de Talleyrand, the mute Pitt of French politics.

"The session having terminated, Mr Pitt profited by this moment of repose, the only one, the last that was reserved to him, to make a voyage in France with two of his friends, Wilberforce and Elliot, like himself members of parliament. The details of this voyage, which Wilberforce has preserved to us, present some amusing circumstances. The three young men, knowing but very imperfectly the French language, wished, before visiting Paris and appearing at court, to put themselves in a position to speak it fluently. They went for this purpose to spend some time at Reims; but, as they had neglected to provide themselves with letters of recommendation, they could only at first enter into relations with a grocer of very small pretensions. It was not without some hesitation on his part that he was persuaded to present them to the intendant of the province, whose house he supplied with goods. Already the police, knowing that three young Englishmen, one of whom described himself as the son of the great Lord Chatham, had arrived, in a very modest equipage, at one of the inns of the town, began to feel some alarm at their presence, and wished to ascertain whether they were not adventurers. The intendant took them under his protection and conducted them to the archbishop, who gave them a grand reception. This prelate was M. de Talleyrand Perigord, afterwards cardinal and archbishop of Paris. He had at that time with him his nephew, the young *abbé*

de Perigord, shortly afterwards made bishop of Autun. The three travellers afterwards proceeded to Paris, and were invited to the *fêtes* at Fontainebleau, where Marie Antoinette received them with distinction."

THE coalition, after three months of almost inert government, was already close upon its ruin. The friends of Pitt recalled him, that he might see the result of his own vengeance. Fox presented to parliament the same treaty of peace which he had stigmatized three months previously in the hands of his adversary; as in France, in 1840, a minister came forward to defend the same attitude abroad which he had attacked, in the case of his predecessor, in 1838, and which that minister, in 1839, had equally maintained against his own attacks. Fox failed in his attempt to take the administration of the East Indies out of private hands, and to claim it on behalf of the government. The private interests, coalescing in their turn, prevailed over the public interest. The ministry being abandoned by a portion of the members of the coalition, Fox, who wished to play the double part of a factious tribune and of a minister of the crown, denounced the king, like another minister in France, to the indignation of the country. This scandal ingulfed him in its own anger. The House abandoned the tribune, the king dismissed the minister. The name of Pitt was invoked as the restorer of so much ruin; his colleagues, men who were almost unknown, surrounded him without adding to his strength. The

coalition had used out, annulled, or disconsidered all the foremost men, whose names had been tainted in this intrigue. A new generation of public men was needed for England: men do not with impunity betray their character. Fox, Burke, Sheridan, and their party could thenceforth only serve to create echoes for factions and obstacles to the government.

It is here the place to set in his true light one of those public men who were favourites in their time. There are moments when the spirit of opposition which requires an organ at any price, the spirit of detraction, which requires a contrast to oppose to true superiority, and the spirit of agitation, which requires the tocsin of a sonorous voice in an assembly, magnify certain men beyond measure. The age lives for some time in this false appreciation of parties; it proclaims as great subaltern minds, feeble characters, or suspicious patriotism. Such is, to our eyes, Fox, the eternal antagonist of Mr Pitt, and his furious competitor unto death and after death. We have scrupulously studied this historical popularity of Fox in his actions and in his words, without prejudice as without favour, during long years; we are the first to venture to throw the light of truth instead of that of conventionality upon this name. What is history if it becomes a complaisance of opinion in respect to parties. History is not the flatterer of public prejudices; its only merit is to blow upon phantoms and to rehabilitate truths. This phantom of a great poli-

tician and of a great patriot to which has been given the name of Fox, and which has given birth to so many other phantoms in his likeness both in England and in France, must at length be dissipated, to show the man of empty wind and sound.

Fox, of the great aristocratic family of Lord Holland, was a younger son of that same Fox who had disputed the favour of the public and of the king with the great Lord Chatham, father of Pitt. Fox was 10 years the senior of Pitt; he was born with less happy dispositions and with a less seductive exterior than his young rival; but the aristocratic and liberal traditions of his family, the fact of his mind being turned from infancy towards political studies, an education altogether oratorical, an ambition derived with his blood from his family, lastly, his election to the House of Commons on leaving the University, had sharpened his intelligence in state matters. He had grown as an orator under the tutelage of Burke, the somewhat studied and diffuse Cicero of the English bar and parliament. The consideration in which Burke was held reflected on his pupil; the high birth of Fox, which, in England, forms, so to speak, a portion of the man, a civic accent, a constant assiduity at the House, a delivery without lustre and without imagery, but abundant, clear, and penetrating, although somewhat heavy, an opposition, vehement and often characterized with invective, against the unpopular ministry of Lord North, had produced in relation to young Fox, amongst the Whigs and the patriots in the House of Commons, one of those infatuations half aristocratic,

half popular, which became so easily transformed into authority in public assemblies. Always ready to speak upon all questions, he sometimes tired by his monotony, but he awakened suddenly by his daring and arrogance those whom he rendered drowsy by too much satiety. His style, neither in his books nor in his speeches, possessed in relief and in colour any of those characteristics which constitute grand prose or great eloquence. Nothing of the action of Demosthenes, nothing of the literary elegance of Cicero, nothing of the inspired poetry of Chatham, nothing of the supremacy of accent of Mirabeau, nothing of the harmonious chain of gilded links of dialectics and imagery in Vergniaud; his eloquence was only elocution. One may read the eight volumes of his harangues without preserving, either in the eye, or in the ear, or in the imagination, or in the heart, one of those magic touches of expression which become for ever incorporated in us with the name of an orator, and which forbids us to forget; he is one of those statues of which one does not pick up the fragments after their fall, because these fragments are neither of porphyry nor of marble.

In character, although adorned with a certain external elegance and a certain pride innate in his blood, Fox did not rise even to the somewhat common level of eloquence. His life was an open disorder, which recalled the loose morals and the ostentation of scandal of the young Roman practitioners, friends of Catiline, of Cettregus, and of Cæsar, in the decadence of the republic; play, wine, debts, penury and luxury, licen-

tiousness of expression, long seasons of idleness, rapid voyages, debauchery of ideas, connections with the most corrupted youth of London and of Europe, were mixed up in this life with the studies of the day, the nocturnal sittings and the oratorical triumphs of parliament. There was nothing in such an existence which was adapted to constitute a tribune of aristocracy, nothing that was adapted to form a citizen or a statesman. And thus Fox, although he affected both one and the other of these noble parts, was in reality neither a statesman nor a citizen in the virtuous acceptation of these words. What was he then? We are about to answer the question: we have required, in order to understand him, long reflection and a long experience of men and things.

There is in free and agitated countries, and free countries are constantly and wholesomely agitated, there is an element which is neither patriotism, nor citizenship, nor opinion, nor conscience, but which takes in turn all these names and all these masks, to simulate these great public things, to create a delusion for itself and for others, and to carry esteem, passion, popularity. This false virtue, this false conscience, this false patriotism, is that element of discord, of agitation, of turbulence, which is termed party-spirit.

Party-spirit, in free governments, takes the place of conscience, of patriotism, of politics, of merit, and, up to a certain point, of eloquence, even to those how

lower themselves sufficiently to become the organs of it, its publicists, its orators. This spirit is not only, as is generally thought, a spirit of opposition which arrays one idea against another, and one portion of the nation against the other; it is mostly a spirit of contest, of negation, and of altercation, which seeks to deny when anything is affirmed and to affirm when anything is denied, for the sole and mischievous pleasure of contradicting evidence itself, and which has for its *ultima ratio* in everything never to listen to reason. This party-spirit, which, cold and empty in its essence, incites the multitude in aristocracies as well as in democracies, delights in its infatuations as in its hatreds; it strikes down men really great to trample them under foot, it raises up false great men to deify them, solely because the former despise it, and because the latter caress it; it invents abusive names to blacken its enemies, it invents civic names in honour of its flatterers; it ends, by dint of writing, of speaking, of vociferating, of stirring the atmosphere, by infiltrating itself into the public morals, and by perverting the natural good sense of public assemblies and of the people, to such an extent that this party-spirit, the soul of factions, although not yet itself a faction, ends by becoming as endemic and as necessary to the nation as the air it respires.

Such is the element which existed in all its intensity in England, in 1783 and in the following years, and of which Fox was predestined by nature to become the corypheus, the hero, the idol.

THERE is, moreover, in governments of free speech and public opinion, another element of success for men of talent possessing no conscience beyond party-spirit; it is that trite, often hollow, and always high-sounding portion of public ideas and sentiments which every one feels proud to profess and to set up as a kind of decorum of mind and heart, that civic self-gratulation which gives to every one the satisfaction of thinking himself above the middle region of public corruption or servility: it is what was termed in the earliest antiquity, at Athens and at Rome, declamation, —*ut declamatio fies!*

This declamation, to the orators and to the tribunes imbued with party-spirit, is, so to speak, the loud and sonorous gong upon which they make their words resound in the distance. It dispenses with common sense, with conscience, with accuracy of view, and often with sincerity; it covers emptiness of thought with a certain heroic pomp of expression; what cannot be shown by argument is declaimed. Assemblies in which partiality exists, and especially the ignorant multitudes, are powerfully impressed by this *os magna sonaturum*, by this majestic rumbling of declamation, which imitates to the life the big voice of conscience, of truth, and of patriotism. Noise sounded in the ears of men is a part of persuasion. They stun those whom they cannot convince; in the absence of persuasion that applause is easily obtained which carries away opinion, which stifles the moderate voice of good sense, and which wins, if not suffrages, some sort of false esteem upon which the declaimers live for

a long time, and which satisfies the orators of party.

Fox had in his nature, with the exception of political and oratorical genius, all the conditions necessary to personify in himself these two virtues of those in whom virtue is wanting: partiality and declamation; a political conscience which simulated inflexibility, and which bent to all the winds of party-spirit; a policy which adorned itself outwardly with the most austere maxims of patriotism, and which continually sacrificed the most permanent interests of his country to the temporary interests of his party or of his discourse; an equal indifference for sophism or for truth; an eloquence, assuming a solemn and aggressive tone, which imitated wonderfully the sacred anger of citizenship, and which readily persuaded the people that a man vibrating with such heroic indignation against the vices or the crimes of his government was the avenger of truth, and the jealous guardian of public liberties. Nature could not have created a more dangerous athlete to augment, in the path of Mr Pitt, the contradictions, the resistances, the calumnies, and the unpopularities which constitute the daily labour, the fatigue, the rivality, the discouragement, the defeat, and at length the glory, of true statesmen.

Burke, though he had been the master of Fox, and shielded the opposition with his authority and his old standing amongst the Whig party, nevertheless did not combine in himself the same conditions of rivality as those which existed in Fox. His Ciceronian elo-

quence, prepared beforehand, almost always written or recited from memory, was not, like that of his pupil, ready at all times to flow either turbid or limpid; he required time, premeditation, metamorphoses studiously sought out, invested with gaudy colours, in a word, all the rhetoric of the schools transported to the House; he was a kind of oracle enclosed in a sanctuary, amidst the pomps and the thunders of the political scene, only to be brought forward on solemn occasions; closely resembling Royer Collard, the Burke of France, who disdainfully furnished axioms to the opposition from the heights of his thought, but who lent to it his authority without adding to its strength.

Sheridan, the third personage of this triumvirate of opposition against Pitt, was superior in talent to the two others, and to Pitt himself. Never perhaps did nature form a man more completely for the eloquence of the tribune: outward beauty, speaking expression of physiognomy, grace and force in his gesture, a ringing voice, sonorous and grave, fluent and coloured elocution, striking imagery, as happy in improvisation as in meditation, a chain of argumentation which, at his will, drew the convictions of men into all the gilded snares of sophism, epigrams which produced roars of laughter, lightning-flashes which dazzled, thunderbolts which crushed, pathos which drew acclamations and tears; Sheridan was not an orator, he was eloquence itself, presented to the admiration, but, alas! also the derision of men! For his eloquence was all in his imagination; neither character, nor conviction, nor virtue, nor conscience, nor real patriotism bestowed

upon him that gift without which there is no eloquence: persuasion.

An adventurer of genius, Irish by race, debauched in mind as in morals, manager of a theatre in London, himself a comic writer, enlisted as a party recruit by the whippers-in of the opposition, the House was to him another stage, upon which, like a sublime histrion, he played the part of an English patriot, as at the theatre he might have taken any other part; the greatest scenic orator who has ever played the indignant patriot before a nation, but this patriot was an actor. Art destroyed eloquence, the part he played annihilated the man. Pitt admired, but could not fear him. When the applause had died away, the effect of Sheridan's speeches no longer existed. The man does not fear the puppet; Sheridan was but an illustrious puppet of the tribune. He played Demosthenes, but he was ever Sheridan.

Here we have the three men of the opposition; they were bound together by their long antagonism to Lord North, by the common apostasy of their character in coalescing with Lord North against the Shelburne ministry, by their own short ministry, which miscarried in their impotency, and lastly by their bitterness and resentment against the king and against Pitt, after their recent fall. They carried with them in their cause almost all the eminent men of the House of Commons, compromised with them either in their opposition, or in their coalition, or in their ministry. Lord North,

Erskine, Windham, Dundas, although secondary in talent, were at least equal to them in credit in both Houses. It may be said that all the talent of England was in the opposition; the names of those who joined young Pitt to bear the brunt of this unanimous opposition have remained obscure. He alone was the government and the combat; England, troubled and full of doubt, anxiously felt that she was in an interregnum.

It was at the commencement of 1784; it had been necessary to reopen the session. Fox and his friends inveighed against their young antagonist with all the abuse which, 60 years later, was employed in France by the coalition against M. Molé. They accused Mr Pitt of being the vile instrument of an occult court influence, scheming the abasement of the national parliament, in order to substitute for it the prerogative of the king; they disputed to the constitutional crown the only indisputable right which belongs to it in the constitution of the three estates: the power of freely nominating its responsible ministers. One might think one was reading the same history in two parliamentary histories. These pretences, powerful with the jealousy of political bodies, withdrew from Pitt the feeble majority upon which he timidly rested. Unconstitutional addresses were voted to the king in order to fetter his liberty in the choice of his ministers; others more insolent were voted, in which the ministry of Pitt was denounced to the king as a ministry of

open conspirators, shielded beneath the royal prerogative, to abuse and to outrage the parliament.

Fox and Burke had no more scruples in offering the last insults and the last menaces to royalty than had the coalition of 1838 in France. All the laws, even the most urgent, which were proposed by Pitt were rejected, the subsidies and taxes even were contested; Pitt opposed to these concerted insults only the silence and the impassibility of an old man. He left time to speak for him; it was evident to England that the coalition had pulverized all the public men who had joined it; that the opposition, apparently so numerous, would break up into incompatible groups the moment the king might touch it to form a ministry; that Burke, Fox, North, Windham, Dundas, had carried party-spirit into faction; that the king could no longer, without lowering himself, place the power in their hands, that they had not strength to take up this power even if it had been thrown at their feet, and that the country would fall into stagnation or into anarchy if some one did not seize the helm in this tempest.

Men began to have their doubts as to that eloquence which had ended only in the double destruction of royal and parliamentary power. They spoke with deserved contempt of these men who had been able to coalesce their hatreds and their ambition, and who could not now coalesce their reason and their patriotism for the safety of their country. They were threatened with a dissolution of the House of Commons, which would send them before the discontented electors.

The popular party, represented by the celebrated agitator and demagogue Wilkes, loudly took the part of Pitt in the papers and in the clubs of the city of London, because Pitt had opposed the scheme of the commercial monopoly of India, brought forward by Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, a scheme that was ruinous for the city merchants; and lastly, the House of Lords, indignant at the encroachments of the coalition upon the royal prerogative and its own influence, carried a motion which firmly claimed for the king the absolute right of nominating his ministers.

The council of the city of London, on the other hand, presented the young minister with the freedom of the city contained in a gold box, for the *courageous and disinterested services he rendered to the constitution, the crown, and the people.* The breath of justice and of national favour arose on every side for Pitt, he had foreseen it, he profited by it with the resolution and the promptitude of a pilot grown skilful before his time. Fox, as humble in this peril as he had been arrogant in success, negociated in order to lead Pitt into a new coalition, in which the opposition would have reserved to his talents the position of which they were worthy; Pitt, too enlightened upon the emptiness of these coalitions, preferred open war to these suspicious transactions. Fox, deceived in his anticipations, attacked him in the House of Commons with an excess of vituperation most degrading for a statesman; Pitt, impassible, replied only by argument to these outrages, and obstinately refused to retire from power, even for a few days.

"No," said he, "I will not abandon the position I occupy to place myself at the mercy of my adversary. He has termed me a nominal minister, the puppet of a secret influence. It is because I will not become in fact a nominal minister of his making, it is because I do not care to become in his hands really a puppet, that I shall not hand in my demission. I certainly do not admit that the ground on which I stand is that of a corrupt influence; but, whatever this ground may be, I shall not quit it to place myself under his patronage, to accept from him my investiture, and to become under his leadership a wretched minister, condemned, by this public penance, to humiliation and impotency, deprived of all strength, and incapable of doing any good. If, as he pretends, I have degraded myself so far as to become the puppet and the favourite of the crown, how could he consent, upon any condition whatever, to become associated with myself? If what is feared in me is too large a share of the confidence of the king, is it considered that this share would be much diminished by my remaining for two days out of office. What was intended by such offers, if I had been blind enough to hand in my demission in the vain hope of shortly again becoming a true minister, was at once to render me an object of disdain and of ridicule to my enemies, and to withdraw from me the esteem of those whose co-operation has hitherto supported me .... It is not by contempt for the House, through the love of power, or from a point of personal honour, that I persist in refusing to leave my post; it is because I think that the situation of the

country makes it a duty for me to defend it as I would defend a fortress."

The scandal of the invectives of Fox against a young man whose only crime was his firmness in shielding the constitution, and the calm energy of the reply made by Pitt, contributed more and more to bring over public opinion, in the city and in the provinces, to the government. The opposition, become quite personal to Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, was now confined only to the House; it ruined itself by one last excess. Fox caused it to vote an address still more insulting and more outrageous to the crown. Pitt seemed to wait for this defial before venturing to lay before the nation the question between Fox and himself. On the 24th March, 1784, the king dissolved the House of Commons; the elections so skilfully prepared for Pitt by the intrigues of his enemies rendered a startling justice to the coalition; two hundred members belonging to the party of Fox, rejected by the electors, made way for sensible patriots, devoted to the maintenance of the constitution and to the support of the three prerogatives of which it is composed.

England seemed to issue from the chaos into which the frantic turbulence of three great orators, and the disloyal coalition of three incompatible parties, had thrown it. A minister of 24 years of age had become, thanks to the violence of his veterans and of his masters, a man permanently necessary to the nation. Fox himself, enveloped in the defeat of his party, was repudiated by all the county electors, and could only re-enter the House of Commons through

the tumultuous and venal election of a suburb of London, an election more tribunitian than national, which disgraced the elected. This election even, contested during nine months as being irregular, left Fox no other refuge but the disgraceful resource of a rotten borough, which was lent in order to reintegrate him in the House.

From that day there was no other part open to him but that of agitator of public discontents, and of permanent contradictor of his young and fortunate rival. He devoted himself to systematic opposition; this was devoting himself to frequent sophisms and an eternal inactivity. Any orator who chains his eloquence to party-spirit degrades it as much as if he chained it to the governing power. In the tribune, as in one's conscience, there is no truth without liberty, and without truth, liberty, and conscience, what is political eloquence? The organ of an obstinate negation to the government. But a nation does not live by negation; to govern is to affirm. In politics, he who denies always will soon be denied himself. Thus it happened with Fox after this triumph of the good sense of Pitt; the measure of his conscience had been given when he was first seen to abdicate all self-respect in his alliance with Lord North. This alliance had resulted in a ministry which lasted for three months; his fury against Pitt was about to result in 20 years of sophism and impotence at the head of the declaimers in his country. Melancholy lesson for politicians who adopt other tactics than conscience to guide them in the labyrinth of public affairs!

The extremity to which the country had been reduced when Pitt took the reins of government, made the House ready to accept his plans for the amelioration of public affairs. He ventured, in the first year of his ministry, to require of the East India Company sacrifices in subordination to the government for which Fox had been unable to prepare the way. Fox, according to his custom, opposed, under the ministry of his rival, the same measures that he had supported under his own. In the discussion on the affairs of India, he so far lost his temper as to pronounce against his adversary the word contempt. To this Pitt replied only by an irony more disdainful than disdain itself; this peroration of his reply is cited in England as one of those rare circumstances where the noble and magisterial eloquence of the statesman avenged itself by a reprisal of the orator.

"When I consider," said he, "the extreme propriety which has at all times distinguished the argumentation of the honourable gentleman who has just spoken, the calmness, the moderation, the accomplished decorum of his language, I must admit that he would have ample grounds for complaint in case one should allow one's self to show the slightest appearance of disregard or disrespect towards him. Far be it from me to wish to render myself guilty of such complete forgetfulness of the rules of good breeding, I am ready, under the circumstances, to do what I have rarely done up to the present time, and what I shall probably rarely do in future; to offer him excuses. I

will do so the more willingly because I may at the same time find an opportunity of explaining to the House the nature of the offence of which he complains, and the cause which led to it. I have long admired the great talent, the marvellous eloquence, the powerful dialectic with which he is so eminently gifted; but he possesses other faculties besides, which could not have struck me less forcibly in the general appreciation of his character, nor have excited my astonishment in a less degree. It is the use which he has just made of some of these faculties that provoked on my part the conduct for which he has so severely censured me. Finding that the question under the consideration of the House afforded none of his favourite themes, he determined, according to his custom, and with his usual skill, to introduce into the debate another matter better adapted to furnish him with the opportunity of satisfying his passionate resentments, and of giving vent to the violent emotions, the implacable malice which his actual position so naturally explains. The tortures of deceived hope, of humiliated pride, of disappointed ambition, become to him still more poignant through the melancholy conviction that he can only attribute to the improvident and immoderate abuse of his power and influence, now faded away, the misfortunes for which he so constantly tries, with so much pathos and with such little success, to move the pity of the House. Full of compassion as I am for such a position, I declare that I should think it inexcusable in myself if the transports of a mind failing beneath the accumulated weight of devouring regrets, of de-

stroyed illusions, and of the painful reproaches he brings against himself, could excite in me any emotion but that of pity; I protest that they have not the power to provoke my anger, not even my contempt."

THE following year he proposed a plan of moderate electoral reform, which consisted in depriving the rotten boroughs of their franchise, and transferring this right to the counties. But this plan appeared too bold to the numerous partisans of routine, and to the proprietors of the abuses. Pitt failed in presence of the power of tradition in the House, and the disinclination of the king to displace a single stone, even a decayed one, of the constitution. The people was as grateful to Pitt for his defeat as it would have been for a victory; he had shown his sincere desire to remedy one of the great defects of the national representation. They had hopes in him: a man from whom much is expected is more looked up to than the man from whom everything has been received.

Pitt used nothing of his popularity without preparing for himself a fresh one; but, instead of seeking it in passion, like Fox, he found it in some moral or material interest of the masses; it was at this period that he created for England a basis of credit in the institution of the *sinking fund*, an institution in itself illusory and even vicious, since it liquidates the public debt only by means of a portion of the borrowed capital applied to the annual extinction of the debt, but an institution which fascinates the eyes of the

lender, by filling up on one hand the abyss of the State debt, whilst on the other it is increased. The sinking fund, false in our days, was to Pitt one of those circumstantial truths to which statesmen must sometimes sacrifice out of condescension for the prejudices of their time. It had no other drawback than that of being a deception, but it was not a falsehood. The credit of the State was increased to the extent of the illusion produced by the sinking fund in relation to specie. This was the treasure prepared by Pitt for the great contingencies which were to occur in his future career.

The year 1786 was wholly occupied, in the House of Commons, by the celebrated trial of Warren Hastings, that English Verres accused by another Cicero.

Hastings, governor-general of the East Indies, had purchased the gratitude of the East India Company by the oppression and the spoliation of populations. No one could know, at such a distance, what there was of legal or of arbitrary in his government; the immensity of the extortion to the profit of his country caused the right or the scandal to be lost sight of. On his return to England after his proconsulate, Hastings had brought home real or exaggerated riches, stained with the tears and the blood of India. The Company, the court, the ministers had received him as a viceroy, from whom no one requires an account of his fortune. The public conscience murmured against this triumph of a man accused by so many suspicions.

Burke gave a voice to this rumour of conscience. He brought a formal impeachment against Hastings, in the most memorable discourse of incrimination which, since the time of Cicero, has ever been fulminated against the spoiler of an empire. Sheridan even surpassed his master in vehemence and in pathos. The speech he made upon the violence and pillage which had been exercised against the Indian princesses of the kingdom of Oude was regarded in England as the master-work of oratorical indignation. Of that kind of eloquence which loses its warmth, and the passion which inspires it, upon leaving the precincts where it is spoken, one can only judge by the echo. The speech of Sheridan against Hastings resounds ever since that day in all the recollections of his country.

This is the statement respecting it of the annalists, the commentators, and the literary men of Great Britain:

"After the glorious triumvirate of Burke, Fox, and Pitt, the first place belongs to Sheridan amongst the orators of this period. If several of his colleagues and of his friends, Grey, Windham, Erskine, surpassed him in enlightenment and in political depth, none can dispute with him the palm of eloquence. The nature of his mind assigns to him a part by himself in the ranks of the opposition. The disciple of Fox, and, like him, a formidable assailant of the ministry, he was more adventurous, more enterprising, more passionate, and he sometimes compromised by his indiscretions the common cause. In the parliamentary lists he has been compared, not without reason, to an indefati-

gable partisan, a guerilla chief, more adapted to *coups de main* and to skirmishing than to great strategic manœuvres; a useful auxiliary in operating diversions and harassing the enemy, but always ready to act upon his own account, and caring but little to combine his movements with the general plan of operations.

"The life of Sheridan has in it something eccentric and original, like his character. The wildness of his youth, probably sketched in his best comedy; his rivality and his double duel with Captain Matthews; his flight to France and his mysterious marriage with Miss Linley, celebrated for her beauty and her musical talent; his rapid and brilliant dramatic successes, and his long intimacy with the heir to the crown, give to his history the charm and the seductiveness of a romance. All these recollections have been reproduced at somewhat too great a length and with useless details, but with powerful interest, by his witty compatriot, the poet Moore. The last portion of his career offers an afflicting spectacle for humanity. If there is anything melancholy in the world, it is to contemplate the distress of Sheridan, after every excess of luxury, dissipation, and prodigality, reduced to pawn his books stamped with the crests of the noblest families of England, the cup which was the precious gift of the electors of Stafford, and even the portrait of his wife, represented with the attributes of Saint Cecilia by the immortal Reynolds. It is painful to see him forsaken, amidst his troubles, by the prince regent, his former protector, announcing in a note that the bailiffs were taking down the curtains from his windows, and come

to arrest him in his bed; lastly, on the point of being taken, whilst dying, to a debtor's prison. It would be difficult to find elsewhere a more instructive lesson on the importance of economy and regular conduct. I know no more striking contrast to the example of Franklin, who, in spite of a more humble origin and less favourable conditions, after prodigies of industry, perseverance, and activity, ended his days in comfort, amidst the homage of foreign courts, surrounded with testimonies of the esteem and veneration of the two worlds."

Sheridan had to encounter, at the onset of his career, disadvantages of more than one kind, capable of discouraging a mind less firm than his own. The obstacles which he had to vanquish, and the means through which he triumphed over them, are referred to by Lord Brougham as follows: "With an ample share of literary renown, but assuredly not that which promises most to a statesman; with very slender acquirements of any utility in political matters; with a birth and social position little adapted to obtain consideration in the most aristocratic country of Europe: the son of an actor and himself manager of a theatre, he entered this parliament, then enlightened by vast and profound knowledge, no less than fortified and embellished by the high reputation of Burke, and under the leadership of accomplished orators, such as Fox and Pitt. His first attempt was modest, and was not successful. An experienced judge, Wordfall, told him that "that would never take," and advised him to return to the more propitious atmosphere of Drury

Lane; but he was determined that "it should take;" his mind was made up, and since he felt that he had the stuff in him, he swore that he would find how to turn it to account. What was wanting to him in acquired talents and natural facility, he made up for by indefatigable industry. Within certain limits, and with a determinate object in view, no amount of labour could overcome him; no one could work, for a time, with more active and sustained application. By constant attention to the smallest details and to the meetings of secret committees; by diligent assiduity at all the debates; by habitual relations with all the agents of the political drama, from the heads of parties and fashionable circles to the purveyors of daily discussions for the public and the reporters of the sittings of parliament, he accustomed himself to a facility of elocution which is absolutely indispensable for all, excepting for superior geniuses, and which is even almost necessary to them, and he acquired all he ever possessed of practical instruction, or what is revealed of it in his speeches. By these steps he raised himself to the rank of an orator of the first order, and of an improvisator as skilful as the defect of promptness and the necessity for preparation could allow him to be.

"The first occasion in which the talent of Sheridan revealed itself in all its power was the celebrated trial of Warren Hastings. There he had the glory of eclipsing his masters. In the distribution of parts between the principal orators of the opposition, his own was to unfold the scene of the acts of rapacity, violence, and extortion of the governor-general of India.

No one was more capable than he was of animating the dryness of judicial debates with the resources of the imagination, nor of pointing out in a striking manner the expedients and the artifices of fiscal avidity. His speech before the House of Commons on the spoliation of the treasures of the princesses of Oude obtained for him a triumph until then without example. 'All parties,' according to the expression of Pitt, 'were fascinated by the enchanter's wand.' The friends and even the defenders of the accused despaired of his cause, and several members demanded an adjournment, in order that they might not vote under the influence of so seductive an eloquence. This speech has not been accurately preserved, but that which Sheridan gave some time afterwards at Westminster, in support of the same impeachment, and by which he captivated during three days the interest and the admiration of the House of Lords, has been gathered from the short-hand notes."

Burke declared, upon leaving the meeting, "that all the various models of oratorical art, all the forms of eloquence known to the ancients or to the moderns, all that the ability of the bar, the dignity of the senate, or the sublimity of the pulpit could offer of most perfect, had nothing that was comparable to that which had been heard that day at Westminster Hall." It is allowable to suppose that the judgment of the great orator yields somewhat, in this circumstance, to his predilection in favour of a political friend, and especially to his interest in the triumph of an accusation of which he himself was the principal promoter. By

a flattery of the same kind, or rather by a sentiment of delicate kindliness towards misfortune, Lord Byron remarked, long afterwards, that Sheridan excelled in all that he undertook, and that to him is due the best English comedy, the *School for Scandal*, the best opera, the *Duenna*, the best farce, the *Critic*, and the finest parliamentary harangue, that on the subject of the princesses of Oude.

Fox spoke, after these two models of the English tribune, with an oratorical talent greatly inferior in majesty and pathos, but with a parliamentary effect more decisive in regard to the opinion against the accused. In Burke it was the advocate that was admired, in Sheridan it was imagination which dazzled, in Fox it was the man of party who excited. The position of Pitt in this debate was a painful one; condemned to silence either by the indecision of his conscience, the fear of appearing to support against his accusers a prevaricating proconsul accused by the public conscience, or the still more honourable scruple against influencing the judges to pronounce a political condemnation by the weight of the government thrown into the scale of justice against the accused, the withering attacks, the maledictions, the imprecations of Burke, Sheridan, and Fox, seemed to reflect upon the minister, without Pitt being able to say a word to clear himself. It was one of the most painful hours of his life.

His neutrality, which was but conscience, appeared

like complicity or weakness. At length he spoke, and in an impartial and arbitrating speech, he cleared Hastings of most of the passionate and calumnious accusations by which his name had been disgraced and rendered odious. But he admitted that, in arbitrarily imposing a tribute of fifty millions upon a nabob, in order to defray the expenses of the war carried on by the Company against Indian nations, Hastings had exceeded his authority, and rendered himself justly liable to the reproach of oppression. Hastings was in consequence sent back to his judges; his trial, continued during eight years with vicissitudes as various and changeable as opinion, ended in his acquittal and his ruin. Terrible and useful example for those despoilers of the rights of races, of national possessions, and of human blood, to the mercy of whom Spain, Holland, England, and France in turn handed over South America, St Domingo, Batavia, the East Indies, and Africa. It is well that the public conscience should sometimes be awakened in horror against its own crimes, and that the passion of party-spirit should at least assume the tone of remorse.

A TREATY of commerce, signed in 1787, between England and France by the hand of Pitt, furnished to this minister the opportunity of being one of the first to develop, in an English assembly, those doctrines of peace and emulation in labour, between nations, which form the basis of universal civilization. Politics, from the lips of the son and disciple of Chatham, at length

took the tone of philosophy; those who, on the faith of the pamphleteers of the Convention or of the Empire, imagine Pitt as the prophet of war, and Fox as the apostle of peace, will read with astonishment this fine fragment of the speech of Pitt, preserved in the archives of the English tribune.

"I do not hesitate to protest," said he, in concluding this severe discussion of interests apparently opposed but in reality identical, "I do not hesitate to protest against that doctrine too frequently advanced here, and too fatally rooted in public prejudices, that France is and must be the constant enemy of England; my mind revolts against so monstrous an assertion; to suppose that a people should be organically and systematically the natural enemy of another country is an idea as impious as it is absurd and puerile, an idea which has no foundation either in the experience of nations, nor in nature, nor in the history of the human race; it is a calumny against nature and a calumny against the institution of societies."

Fox, faithful to his eternal contradiction, which was to opine for peace when necessity constrained his country to go to war, did not fail to insist upon the natural and permanent enmity of England and France when Pitt endeavoured to reconcile these nations in labour, commerce, and peace, the common interests of all men. He denounced, as so many proofs of this permanent enmity, the measures adopted by the French government to strengthen its marine and to oppose on every point the negociations of the cabinet of London. Seeking examples in the past, in support of his argu-

ment, he endeavoured to prove that, even when the cabinet of Versailles had appeared to modify its conduct and its tendencies, its only aim had been to deceive the British Government, to withdraw it from its alliances, to enchain it by the bond of commercial and financial interests, to the extent of depriving it of all liberty of action. Lastly, he devoted to public malediction the men so forgetful of the greatness of their country, so deeply enveloped in the cowardly feelings of their own business, as to wish that England, fallen from her ancient splendour, weakened, humiliated by recent losses, should hasten, on the first opportunity, to contract an intimate relation with that proud neighbour who had inflicted them upon her.

The whole opposition followed Fox in his system of furious and permanent enmity between the two nations, "The life of one and the death of the other!" was the maxim of Fox and his friends at this period, as it became afterwards the maxim of the Napoleonic despotism under the Empire. Pitt and reason triumphed.

But the difficulties of this great minister were not less in relation to the royal family than in parliament. The Prince of Wales, who was in our days George IV., then presumptive heir to the throne, was one of those princes so frequently met with in the annals of monarchies, who during their youth sap by their vices the throne which they in vain seek to strengthen during their maturity. The debts, the disorders, the disrespect towards his old father, the amours, sometimes myste-

rious, sometimes scandalous, of the Prince of Wales, at once brought into disrespect the king, his ministers, and the future reign. The corruption of England was exposed upon the first step of the throne. Threatened with the divulgation of a secret marriage which he had contracted with a young Catholic lady of respectable birth, of stainless virtue, and of celebrated beauty; threatened on the other hand with the publication of his debts by his innumerable creditors; the Prince of Wales, in order to secure a support in parliament, had recently leagued himself with Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, against the policy and the ministers of his own father. This unnatural league of the heir to the throne with the enemies of the paternal government had been cemented not only by the interests of ambition on one side, of cupidity on the other, but moreover by the vices they possessed in common. The friendship between Sheridan and the Prince of Wales was founded upon a fellowship in disorder; the prince and the manager of a theatre emulated each other in indecency in their private conduct; Fox himself, abandoned to gambling and to the prodigalities of a life careless of self-respect, excused vices which served his cause; Burke and his friends, more severe, tolerated in the opposition what they would justly have contemned in the court; the most flagrant immorality dishonoured this alliance of all the licentiousness of youth in the prince with all the austerity of opposition in the party of Fox; hypocrisy without a mask, which should have made the opposition blush, if party-spirit left to party-men the power of blushing.

Pitt felt the dangers of this fatal division between the Prince of Wales and his father. The king would be lowered by it in his own opinion, the opposition increased to the proportions of a faction, the prince compromised for the whole future of his reign. Independently of these wholly political considerations on the part of Pitt, the purity of his own life, even in all the fire of youth, inspired him with a natural repulsion for this court debauch mingled with this debauch of opposition. Whether through decency as a public man, through preoccupation of a mind exclusively absorbed from his earliest youth in the study of literature, of oratorical art, of the public interests; or through an ambition so innate that it had not left to him the period of youth, the cold and irreproachable morals of Pitt contrasted with his appearance. The opposition scoffed at his virtue; some by admiration, others in derision, called him the *Virgin of the ministry*. His most intimate friends asserted that he had never been known to form a *liaison* with any woman. He shunned the societies or the pleasures which might have corrupted or rendered more effeminate the manly austerity of his mind. A few friendships with serious men, such as the virtuous Wilberforce, the Las Casas of England, and, at a later period, with Windham and with Canning, the long sittings of the House of Commons, the rare ministerial councils before the king, the preparation of business, and, in the evening, conversation with some habitual guests, prolonged at table until sleep, formed his whole life. His only recreation was to retire, once or twice a week, to a

little country-house which he had inherited from his family, amidst the wild heaths of Putney.

"I saw Mr Pitt pretty frequently," says M. de Chateaubriand in his Memoirs of Half a Century, "as he crossed St James's Park on foot, on his way to the king from his mansion. On the other hand, George III. arrived from Windsor. After drinking beer from a pewter pot with the farmers of the neighbourhood, he traversed the ugly yards of his ugly castlet in a grey carriage, followed by a few horse-guards; this was the master of the kings of Europe, as four or five merchants in the city are the masters of India. Mr Pitt, dressed in a black coat, with a steel-hilted sword by his side and his hat under his arm, mounted the staircase, two or three steps at once. He found on his passage only two or three business men awaiting an audience. Throwing upon them an absent glance, he passed on, his face pale.

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"Lord Liverpool, in the month of June, 1822, took me to dine with him at his country-house; as we passed over Putney Heath, he pointed out to me the small house where the son of Lord Chatham, the statesman who had had all Europe in his pay, and distributed with his own hands all the millions of the earth, died poor."

Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, in order to pay to the Prince of Wales the salary for his complicity with the opposition against his father and against Pitt, pro-

posed to the House an address to the king, to induce that monarch to demand of the country the sums necessary to pay the debts of his son, and to maintain the dignity of the establishment of a royal prince. Pitt entreated the king to accede paternally to this request of the opposition. The king, irritated against his son, would not reward the Prince of Wales, through the national munificence, for his culpable alliance with the party hostile to his government. This refusal of the king obliged Pitt to evade before the House of Commons the proposition of the friends of Fox in favour of the prince. In the discussion which arose on this subject, the friends of Fox and of the prince were obliged to deny in the name of their royal client, his secret marriage with the young Catholic lady, Fitz-Herbert. This marriage was nevertheless as authentic as these kinds of unions can be in a country which does not recognize them; the family of Miss Fitz-Herbert, and this young lady herself, considered themselves with reason as disgraced by this disavowal of the Prince of Wales, who threw doubt or dishonour upon a love from which were thus taken its innocence and its purity.

Public opinion, so chaste in England, disgraced in its turn a prince and the accomplices in his debaucheries who did not scruple to dishonour a love illegitimate in its form, but respectable in its object and in its vows, for the sake of a vile subsidy to be obtained from parliament. A cry of general indignation arose, from every family outraged in a single one, against the king's son, against the opposition, and

especially against Burke, Fox, and Sheridan. This faction was with reason accused of sacrificing the moral dignity of the heir to the throne, and the honour of English families, to ambition and to the impatience of party-spirit. The discussion threatened to become personal and scandalous in the House of Commons: Pitt prevented it by wresting from the king a pardon for his son, and the authority to himself demand of parliament the payment of his debts and a larger allowance to minister to his luxury. He himself bore to the Prince of Wales this pardon and this munificence on the part of his father. The discussion was avoided, the debts paid, the last scandal saved. The young minister, with the wisdom of an old man, sacrificed a certain victory in parliament, and the satisfaction of dishonouring his enemies, to the purity of public morals and to concord in the royal family. But this magnanimity of the minister neither reformed the prince of his disorders nor the party of Fox of its open understanding with the prince. The scandal of an opposition upholding the licentiousness of a royal prince, and of a royal prince upholding against the paternal government the manœuvres and the audacity of a faction, was speedily renewed.

Despite the fury of this faction against him, Pitt did not disavow when in power the philosophy he had professed when out of power. In 1787 he urged with sublime eloquence the freeing of the negroes and the abolition of the traffic in slaves, without considering

whether he thus ruined his popularity with sailors, traders, and the English colonies. The speech which he pronounced as a philosopher and not as a minister in the discussion raised on this subject by his friend Wilberforce, raised him above his ministerial situation in the sphere of nature, religion, and eternal legislation.

The impression produced in England, in Africa, and in Europe by this speech is found with an echo which resounds to the bottom of the human heart in the written recollections of the period. He repeated it with a new accent in 1792. These two discourses became blended in each other; never, say the parliamentary annals of the two periods, did political eloquence approach more closely the holiness of sacred eloquence.

We have seen renewed in France this long struggle, ended at length in 1848, between self-interest and humanity. These French discussions were as warm and as memorable; principles gave soul to words, voices were rendered more grand with holy emotions, the rostrum there too became sacred: M. de Tracy and his friends were the Wilberforce of France.

The speech of Pitt on the abolition of slavery, says Mézière, is regarded as the master-work of this great orator. The peroration he quotes was rendered more solemn by the breathless attention, and by the silence of night, in Westminster Hall.

"It is long, gentlemen, since we emerged from barbarity. . . . We have almost forgotten that we were barbarians. . . . Our present situation offers a

striking contrast to all the features by which a Roman might have characterized us, and by which we now characterize Africa. Doubtless, there is one condition wanting to complete the contrast, and to absolve us entirely from the reproach of acting now like barbarians; for we still continue at this day an odious traffic in slaves: we continue it in spite even of our incontestable titles to civilization. We were once as obscure amongst the nations of the earth, as savage in our customs, as corrupt in our morals, as degraded in our intelligence, as are now these unhappy Africans. But, in the long course of ages, by a slow progression, and one at first almost insensible, we have become rich in the most varied acquirements, favoured beyond measure with the gifts of Providence, without rivals in commerce, pre-eminent in the arts, foremost in the researches of philosophy and science, gifted with all the benefits of civil society. We are in possession of peace, happiness, and liberty; we follow as our guide a religion gentle and beneficent; we are protected by impartial laws and by the purest administration of justice; we live under a system of government which our happy experience leads us to recognize as the best and wisest that has ever been conceived, a system which is an object of admiration to the universe. All these advantages would have been forbidden us if there was any truth in the principles which certain orators have not scrupled to declare applicable to Africa. If these principles had been true, we should still have languished at the present hour in the miserable state of ignorance, brutality, and abjection in

which, as history proves, our ancestors were plunged. If other nations had adopted these rules of conduct in respect to us, if other nations had applied to England the argument which some legislators of this island now apply to Africa, the centuries might have passed without freeing us from barbarity; and we who enjoy the benefits of English civilization, of English laws, and of English liberty, perhaps might be, at this day, scarcely superior, in morals, knowledge, or progress, to the rude inhabitants of Guinea.

"If, then, we feel that this perpetual imprisonment in the bonds of a brutal ignorance would have been the greatest calamity that could have befallen us, if we contemplate with gratitude and delight the contrast between the precious benefits which we enjoy and the unhappy condition of the ancient inhabitants of England, if we tremble in thinking of the ills with which we should still be overwhelmed if Great Britain had continued to the present day to be a slave-market for more civilized nations, through some effect of their cruel policy; Heaven preserve us from any longer submitting Africa to so terrible a scourge, and from preventing the rays of science, which have reached every other portion of the globe, from penetrating to its shores!

"I trust that we shall in future renounce a commerce destructive of all progress for this vast continent, and that we shall not think that we confer too great a favour upon its inhabitants by replacing them in the ranks of men. I trust that we shall not consider ourselves too generous if, by the abolition of the

traffic in slaves, we leave to them the same chances of civilization as to the other countries of the world, and that we shall at length offer to Africa the opportunity . . . the hope . . . the prospect of obtaining the advantages which, by a propitious arrangement of Divine Providence, we have had the privilege of enjoying much sooner. If we listen to the voice of reason and of duty, if we at once follow the plan of conduct that they prescribe, some amongst us may live long enough to see the counterpart of a picture from which we now turn our gaze with shame and regret. We may live to see the inhabitants of Africa engaged in the peaceable works of industry, in the just and legitimate conquests of commerce. Perhaps we are destined to see science and philosophy spreading over those regions lights which, at some happy period of a yet unknown future, will shine with the purest lustre, and which, uniting their influence with that of a holy religion, may illuminate and vivify the furthest confines of that immense continent." It is allowed to hope that Africa may then, although the last of all the portions of the globe, enjoy, at least in the decline of its days, benefits which have been so liberally conferred upon us, almost in the dawn of our days. Then Europe in its turn, participating in its progress and in its prosperity, will receive ample compensation for its tardy benevolence, if benevolence is required in no longer preventing a country from emerging from the darkness which has disappeared much earlier in other more fortunate climes.

'Nosque ubi primus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis,
Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.'"

It is stated that when Pitt pronounced this passage after a long night sitting, the first rays of the sun penetrated in the hall of parliament, a circumstance which increased the effect of so happy and so poetical an application. The success of this speech was prodigious. The opposition shared in the general enthusiasm; Fox and Sheridan vied with each other in expressing their admiration, and Windham declared that until that day he had not conceived of the full power of human eloquence.

One of those providential blows that no human wisdom can avert surprised Pitt, in 1788, amidst the continued prosperity of his ministry. King George III. experienced, during an adjournment of the Houses of parliament, the first attack of that transient and alternating madness which ended by completely impairing his mind, and by causing, not the sceptre, but the government of three kingdoms to be placed in the hands of the Prince of Wales, his son. Pitt found himself placed, by this melancholy event, in one of those critical positions which are stronger than man, when man is below the level of the inflictions of God. To cover the insanity of the king by silence would have been a deceit unworthy of royalty and of the nation; to hasten to confess the royal infirmity was, perhaps prematurely, to degrade the crown in the eyes of the people, and to prejudge of the definitive

extinction of a reason which might recover; to place the royal power wholly in the hands of a young prince royal in disrepute for his disorders, and bound to a faction which might use him as an instrument to ruin the monarchical constitution, was to betray his duty, his convictions, his country.

Pitt suspended his determination during a few weeks, fearful of too long delaying or unduly precipitating his measures. Nature seemed to take pity upon his anguish, the king became calm, his intellect awakened; he was able to open in person the parliament of November 1, 1788. But all the symptoms of his insanity became evident, during this ceremony, in the disorder and stupor of his countenance. It was necessary to appeal to the reason of the country to fill up the void occasioned by the failure of the reason of the king. On the 20th November Pitt made known the king's illness and demanded an adjournment of business for 15 days, to allow to the physicians and to nature the time to declare themselves. These 15 days were reluctantly accorded by the opposition. A committee of physicians declared that the king was then incapable of exercising the functions of royalty, but that there was a probability of recovery, the period of which could not, however, be specified. Another committee, wholly political, was demanded by Pitt, in order to seek in the historical traditions of England a precedent to govern the conduct of parliament in analogous circumstances. He requested the adjournment of all motions until the report of this committee.

The scandalous and almost parricidal impatience

of the friends of the Prince of Wales, anxious to seize through his hands the sceptre upon the bed of a venerable king bowed down under the affliction of the Almighty, caused this adjournment, respectful towards Providence and towards the king, to be vehemently rejected by Fox. He altered his tone and his language, on this occasion, with the same flagrant want of propriety as when he formerly allied himself with the ministry of Lord North which he himself had branded with disgrace. Betraying all the doctrines of radical opposition held by his party, which placed the sovereignty in the people, he suddenly, from the necessity of his cause, placed it in the monarchical succession alone; he maintained, with all the asperity of an apostle of despotism, that the intervention of parliament in controlling the royal power was an attempt against the monarchy, and that this power should immediately and entirely, without the participation of the nation, fall of its own accord, with all its attributes, into the hands of the Prince of Wales.

Pitt, fortunate in this juncture in never having abandoned the true dogmas of the liberty of his country, spoke like a citizen who defends the prerogatives of his country as well as like a minister who provides for his country's peril. Burke, led away by Fox and by that verbosity which readily takes up any cause, the misfortune and the strength of advocates, supported the absolute rights of the prince. The patriots, indignant against this apostasy on the part of their orators, rose up against them, in the clubs and in the journals, and proclaimed that Pitt had

alone promulgated the true principles. Fox, as prompt to retract as to contradict himself, recalled his sophisms in a second speech, and excused whilst pretending to explain them. But he had allowed Pitt to take the heights of patriotism. From these heights, Pitt crushed him beneath the logic of liberty. Sheridan, the personal friend and confidant of the prince, went so far as to offer a menace in the name of his friend; he hinted that, if parliament hesitated, the prince would seize upon the regency solely in his own right as heir to the throne. Pitt, upon this menace, made an energetic appeal to the unrecognized and threatened rights of the people; the Prince of Wales wrote to the chancellor an official letter full of complaints against Pitt, who wished, said this prince, to weaken and mutilate in his hands the prerogatives of the regency. This memorable debate is admirably resumed in a few pages of the Essay upon parliamentary history by M. de Vielcastel. The writer, accredited in this case by the diplomatist, elucidates better than any one else this obscurity in which all the parts are inverted between Pitt and Fox.

"The discussion upon the conclusions of the political committee charged with ascertaining and adapting the traditions relative to the regency," says he, "this discussion, of which Pitt had proclaimed the necessity, had been opened, in the mean while, before the House of Commons. Pitt presented a series of resolutions to the effect that the king was not in a condition to exercise the functions of royalty, that the right and the duty of parliament were to provide for

them according to the exigencies of the situation, and that it belonged also to parliament to determine the means by which the royal assent might be replaced, with the view to render valid the acts which would constitute the regency. It was more and more evident that the ministry wished to gain time, and to leave everything in suspense. The opposition redoubled its efforts to overthrow these tactics. It demanded that the prince should be immediately invited to assume the regency, and that the acts necessary to regulate the form of it should afterwards be drawn up with his concurrence, which he would certainly not refuse to the expressed wishes of the two Houses; it pointed out the inconveniences, the dangers of the system proposed by Pitt, which, by conferring on parliament the right of election, tended to transform the monarchy into a republic; availing itself of the example of 1688, it pointed out that at that epoch the Houses, up to the moment when the throne was filled, had considered themselves as a convention, and not as a parliament. Such was the language held by Lord North, by Windham, by Sheridan, who accused Pitt of obeying the inspirations of his personal ambition, and of cherishing odious suspicions against the heir to the throne, by Burke, and especially by Fox, who, in a speech as clever as it was eloquent, persisted in deducing the right to the regency, with all respect to the adjudication of parliament, from the same principle as the right of succession to the crown.

"In answer to the reproach which was brought

against him of placing himself, by so monarchical a theme, in opposition to the part he ordinarily took, that of a defender of popular rights, he protested that, accustomed to oppose the encroachments of royalty when in its strength, he would not be found seeking to strip it in its weakness, according to the example of a minister who, to embarrass the position of the men called upon to replace him in power, did not hesitate to raise himself above such a scruple.

"To the claims which were put forward in favour of the prince, Pitt, supported by the Solicitor-general, the Master of the Rolls, and other distinguished lawyers, opposed absolute denials, principally founded on the authority of precedents. More calm, more self-possessed than were his adversaries, he was, nevertheless, in respect to them, neither less cutting nor less personal than they had been towards him; he declared that if Fox and his friends were, as they openly boasted, to be called into the councils of the future regency, this was, in his opinion, a further motive for adopting wise precautions to deprive them of the means of preparing obstacles to the exercise of the royal authority at the period so ardently desired when it might resume its action. The resolutions which were proposed were voted by heavy majorities. Communicated to the House of Lords on the following day, they there occasioned similar debates, ending in the same result. Out of parliament, opinion pronounced itself in favour of the policy of Pitt. Numerous addresses, received by both Houses, expressed the approbation of which it was the object:

two or three only of those which reached them were upon the side of the opposition.

"Pitt, having at length prepared his grounds and ripened his plan of organization of the regency, wrote to the Prince of Wales to make known to him its bases. The royal authority was to be placed in the hands of the regent only with the restriction of conferring no peerage, nor any appointment for life or in reversion, with the exception of those which are so in their nature; no power was given him over the personal property of the king; the guardianship of the person of the king was intrusted to the queen; the whole royal establishment was placed under her authority, with the power of nominating and dismissing the officers belonging to it; a council would be nominated by the two Houses for her to consult when she might consider necessary; this council was every day to ascertain the condition of the king's health, and the administration of the estate of the monarch might also be intrusted to it, without, however, giving them the right of alienating any portion of it. In case the illness of the king should be prolonged, these provisions might be modified.

"The Prince of Wales, in his reply to the communication from the minister, bitterly protested against a project which, according to him, was dictated by an offensive feeling of mistrust, and which appeared calculated to sow division in the royal family, against a project which weakened beyond measure the sovereign power, and compromised even the principle of monarchy; he nevertheless declared

that, being solely devoted to the welfare of his country, he would accept the conditions which were offered if, contrary to his hope, they obtained the sanction of parliament. Pitt replied to this singular consent by the coldly respectful expression of the regret he experienced in seeing his intentions thus misappreciated."

THE struggle was terrible and to the knife between Pitt and his enemies upon the bill which limited the powers of the Prince of Wales during his regency. "Almost all the clauses of the bill were opposed with fury. Burke, whose imperious temper became soured more and more by the progress of age and the multiplied deceptions of a long opposition, distinguished himself by his outbursts of passion amongst all the adversaries of the project. He represented it as the work of an obscure and contemptible clique who wished to re-establish divine right, not, as in the time of the Stuarts, to the advantage of a dynasty, but to the profit of a ministry, and to degrade, outlaw, declare unworthy the confidence of the country, the Prince of Wales as well as all the princes of the House of Hanover. Irritated by the contemptuous laughs which these extravagant expressions provoked upon the benches of the majority, he forgot himself so far as to accuse the House of itself committing, by its votes, acts of treason for which England would one day demand an account. He attacked in abusive terms the good faith of a physician who had announced it to be

likely that the king might shortly recover. Under the pretext of causing the necessities of the situation to be duly appreciated, he tore aside the veil of respect that the other orators avoided raising in their allusions to the state of the monarch's health; he seemed to delight in speaking of it without circumlocution, without reticence, with a gloomy eloquence which carried to the soul of the adorers of the monarchy a sentiment of pain and horror. Wishing to convince the House of the perils which might arise from their not adopting sufficient precautions to assure themselves, when it might be necessary, of the reality of the recovery of the king, and of his capability of resuming the governing power, he cited numerous examples of dreadful violences committed by madmen who had been considered as cured, and who had been too readily restored to liberty. Murmurs and exclamations of horror several times interrupted these strange vagaries of the man who, some months later, was to become the most extravagant champion of the cause of monarchy. On the side of the friends of the ministry the debate was also not always confined within the limits of moderation. The insinuations of the preceding year relative to a secret marriage of the Prince of Wales with a Catholic, by which he would have compromised his rights to the crown and to the regency, were reproduced. Amidst these reciprocal exaggerations, Pitt, repelling with contemptuous haughtiness the insults and the threats of his enemies, restraining the excessive zeal of his partisans, always as calm, as firm, as though the vote which was about to be given

had not been, to all appearance, the signal for his downfall and for the elevation of the opposition, Pitt successfully opposed, with equal lucidity and presence of mind, all the amendments which were proposed to modify the bill. They were all rejected, with the exception of one to which he gave his assent, and which limited to three years the interdiction laid upon the regent against creating peers. The bill was sent up the next day to the House of Lords. The discussion which it there occasioned seemed likely to be a prolonged one, when the chancellor appeared to announce that the condition of the king had suddenly altered, and that this prince would shortly be able to resume the exercise of royalty."

Thus ended a crisis which had kept England during three months in interregnum; Pitt had reigned alone, first through his silence upon the illness of the king, then through his courage, and lastly by his daring in declaring himself the antagonist of his future master, and in leaning upon his permanent master, his country. This reign had raised him at once as a minister and as a patriot, England rested upon a defender of its rights, the king upon the defender of his throne.

Fox, deceived in his ambition and stripped of his mask of patriotism by the antinational doctrines which he had supported, had fallen into an humiliating apostasy from himself. He sought in the spirit of faction an attitude and an importance which he had lost in the

spirit of party. It is the fate of men of this character never to throw off one fault without exaggerating the opposite fault by which it is redeemed, and, in the eyes of their partisans, aggravated. He now played his third part before public opinion and in the parliament, whilst awaiting a fourth, as contradictory to the three others, the part of French revolutionist in a parliament of England.

The French Revolution had broken out, and each of its explosions, conquering liberty for the French nation, but foreign to the interests and the situation of Great Britain, carried away a fragment of the throne, the priesthood, and the aristocracy in France. The reactions shook everything in Europe with terror, admiration, or sympathy. Two parties had arisen in European opinion, as they had in France within the Revolution itself: one which applauded its philosophical and democratic principles whilst deprecating its excesses and deploring its catastrophes; the other which inspired it with impostures, fury, and radicalisms, the causes of its crimes and its deceptions. It had, like all powers, its true friends in its moderators, its evil counsellors in its flatterers. Fox enrolled himself from the first amongst the latter. He made himself in the House of Commons, not the rival of Mirabeau, but the fawning and fanatical echo of the Jacobins.

The defection of the *gardes françaises* on the 14th July was represented by him to the English army as a *glorious example* which the French soldiers gave to all the soldiers of Europe. This appeal to *disciplined insurrection*, the last scourge of empires where the people pays

for its defence a permanent army, shook the very roofs of Westminster. Burke, stung at length in his conscience as an English citizen by this hymn to armed insurrection against fidelity to the oaths and to the constitution, confessed with painful firmness his aversion for the prinples upon the discipline of troops and the very foundation of legal society, with which one of his old friends had just scandalized the House. In conclusion, he declared that no friendship could long survive in him so complete a divergence, not only of opinions, but of actions and of conscience.

Windham, a few days afterwards, also withdrew from the faction of Fox, upon some questions relative to the French Revolution, and came over to the side of Pitt, of whom he gradually became the friend, the colleague, and the right-hand in the ministry. The party of Fox ceased to be a political party, and became a radical party, threatening, on the example of France, the constitution of its country. The violence of the doctrines of this party threw, from sheer terror, almost the whole of England into the conservative party of Pitt. Fox had the imprudence to open the question between the Constitution and the Revolution. A question so rashly and so inopportunely entered upon at a period when liberty was already enjoyed, and which could only be agitated in favour of anarchy, reduced the party of Fox to 15 members in the House of Commons, the popular agitators in the suburbs of London, and the Irish, the natural support of all factions in every crisis of England. The Monarchists supporting no particular dynasty, the moderate Whigs and the

Tories, the clergy, the aristocracy, the middle classes, proprietors, farmers, men of commerce, small tradesmen, the artisans themselves, gathered around the government, and everywhere gave Pitt a majority, which hitherto had been a rational majority of esteem, but which, from that day, became a majority eager for the public safety. The incendiary and uncalled for Jacobinism of Fox created in England a fanaticism for royalty.

SHERIDAN, the friend and the habitual organ in the House of Commons of the Prince of Wales, followed and sometimes went beyond Fox in his apotheosis of French Jacobinism. Fox had vaunted the Constitution of 1791 as the most perfect and glorious monument that any people had ever raised to human reason; Sheridan overwhelmed with invectives the fallen government of the Bourbons, and set forth this grand and salutary ruin as an example for the imitation of his country. England became covered with clubs, and was inundated with the pamphlets of demagogues, which echoed the speeches of Fox and Sheridan. The suburbs, the manufacturing towns, and Ireland were filled with vague agitations; it was feared that movements might happen similar to that of October at Versailles. Burke, more and more thrown into the excess of royalism by these excesses of public radicalism, wrote against the French Revolution the most tragic and the most eloquent declamation that an aristocracy has ever put forward against the emancipation of a people. He was the precursor of another prophet of

the past, the Count Joseph de Maistre, that other Pindar of the ultra-monarchical and ultra-catholic paradox, who at a later period made of the double servitude, civil and religious, the reversed type of the beauty of institutions.

The work of Burke, more moderate, did not, however, carry opinion to this contempt for itself, but only to the point of terror and execration of French Jacobinism. His book, of which 300,000 copies were spread in England and in Europe, became the gospel of English conservatives. This popular success proved to Pitt that the constitutional and monarchical spirit of the country had not yielded under the attacks of the radicalism of Fox, Sheridan, and their sect. He rejoiced in being able to attach to his ministry an orator and writer so powerful as was the great Burke. The discussion upon Canada of itself gave him the opportunity of doing so. Burke and Fox, so long friends, on this occasion clashed in a political debate, which soon became personal. Burke declared in a solemn voice that every link between Fox and himself was for ever severed by a schism of doctrines which no longer allowed to exist between them anything of what had been the honour and the motive of their union. Fox at first interceded with tears to obtain the retraction of these words, and the resumption of their ancient and sacred affection, but soon allowing himself to be carried away from supplication to sarcasm, he wounded to the heart the man whom he pretended to wish to appease, and threw upon their ancient friendship the bitter ashes of the most unpardonable words. Pitt himself, though in-

wardly rejoicing in a rupture which deprived the opposition of its most illustrious oracle, was moved by this sacrilegious recrimination between two friends who had become the public scandal against friendship. He interfered, with expressions of grief, to separate the opponents who were about to outrage each other in their farewell.

This scene, of which the pathos equalled the eloquence, and in which nature appeared with its tears in the midst of politics, touched the world as a scene of tragedy upon a real theatre. The two friends, become enemies, were never reconciled. A revolution separated them beyond the possibility of return.

Pitt was so far, at this period, from premeditating a war with revolutionary France, and from combining a coalition against her, that he openly pronounced himself against Russia, who was waging war against the Ottoman Porte, and represented before parliament the urgent necessity of stopping the invasions of the Russian empire in the Crimea and on the Danube. Fox, with his usual contradiction, opposed this far-seeing policy of the prime minister, affecting to abandon to itself this Russian power which was soon to preponderate in the West with all the influence which it was allowed to acquire in the East. To contradict was the whole policy of Fox, but Fox, on this occasion, went further; he opened with the Empress of Russia officious relations forbidden to any citizen with a foreign power; he sent a young relative of his, Mr Adair,

to St Petersburg to observe the policy of the court of Russia, and to encourage it, it is said, in not heeding the resistance of Pitt to its encroachments upon the Turks. A cloud has remained upon this voyage of Mr Adair and upon this connivance of Fox with Russia; but his known connivance with the demagogic clubs of Paris, and, at a later period, with emissaries of Napoleon, against the views of the British cabinet, left a margin for suspicion. With Fox party-spirit appeared to have the advantage over the scruples of patriotism.

The whole conduct of Pitt, both at home and abroad, during these two years, 1791 and 1792, attests that he meditated no war beyond a defensive one in the House of Commons, for his principles, against the revolutionary propaganda of Fox and his friends. Independently of his general policy, based until then upon peace, he had two personal motives for avoiding a war with France. The first of these motives was that he had himself, in spite of the efforts of Fox, defended the principle of peace between the two nations, and ended by a treaty the long war which was ruining both; his *amour-propre* was interested in not contradicting himself, before his adversaries, in the House of Commons. The second motive was that he had made it his glory to restore, by order, economy, the sinking-fund, and progressive liberty in commerce, the involved finances of England, that he had been wonderfully successful in so doing, and that the out-

burst of war would have ruined all this system of administration in the English finances, which was the most prosperous, and which was then the admiration of economists. To overthrow his work with his own hand was a hard task for his pride.

Lastly, he did not dissimulate to himself that Russia, whose encroachments upon the Ottoman empire had been arrested by himself alone, would undoubtedly profit by the conflagration of Europe to carry on its usurpations of territory and of seas in the East, and perhaps to establish itself at Constantinople. The occurrences in our own days bear witness to the foresight of this great politician. He was, moreover, penetrated with the principle of the non-intervention of one nation in the internal institutions of another people. Himself a Revolutionist of 1688, an English patriot of the school of his father, Lord Chatham, having always openly professed in face of the throne, as was seen in the affair of the regency, the sovereignty of the people in its representatives, there was nothing, up to 1793, in the actions and in the institutions of France, that was to his mind a crime or even a scandal. He had refused, up to the day of the 10th of August, which dethroned Louis XVI., and which hurled him from his throne to a dungeon, to interfere either as an auxiliary, or even as a mediator, between Austria and France when at war with each other. He had received without difficulty at London two French negociators charged by the Girondin ministry to demand of the English government its pacific mediation between France and the emperor;

he had received in close conference M. de Talleyrand. M. de Talleyrand was a secret ambassador, concealed under the cloak of the official mission of M. de Chauvelin, a young man without any other authority but his title and his zeal as a Girondin neophyte. Two men as superior as diplomatic, and so much of the same mind in regard to an alliance between the two countries, could well understand each other in concerting a plan of alliance. The outline of this plan was sketched between them in the cabinet of Mr Pitt, when the unexpected catastrophe of the 10th of August precipitated both the Girondin minister from power, and Louis XVI. from the throne. This revolution broke at the same time the first threads of the alliance scarcely woven between M. de Talleyrand and Mr Pitt.

France was falling into interregnum, into anarchy, into terror, perhaps into regicide. The first minister of a regular monarchy could treat neither with emptiness, nor with anarchy, nor with the scaffold of a king. Still Mr Pitt did not yet give up the hope, nor even the illusion of peace. M. de Talleyrand, with that sagacity which was his nature, withdrew from all negociation on the morrow of the Revolution, and prepared to fly to America, there to allow the popular storm to blow over. M. de Chauvelin, as disposed to serve the victorious Jacobins as he had been to serve the overthrown Girondins, obtained from Mr Pitt the authority to prolong his stay at London, in spite of the recall of the English ambassador from Paris, after the imprisonment of the king. This young man still carried on

negociations in the name of the new ministers of the Convention. M. Maret, afterwards Duke of Bassano, was sent from Paris to confer more confidentially with Mr Pitt; Maret, after several conferences, returned to Paris with the conviction that Mr Pitt desired to preserve peace as earnestly as did Danton himself. A spontaneous and almost convulsive movement of public opinion in the three kingdoms, a movement of horror consequent upon the dreadful massacres of December at Paris, and the emigration which sent thousands of exiles to London, forced the policy of the government. The English clubs and the Jacobin affiliations in the manufacturing towns had created such alarm in all the conservative classes of the nation, that there now remained only seven voices in the House of Commons on the side of Fox. Fear had driven every one over to the majority, and the majority had itself become so violent that it considered Mr Pitt too forbearing and temporizing. It was no longer in France, but at home, that England combated the Revolution. Any pact made with France seemed to it like a treason against itself.

M. de Chauvelin, accused of making himself the client of Fox and the propagandist at London of the demagogues of the Convention, was invited to withdraw. In antagonism to the anarchical clubs of London, *royalist* committees, a powerful and spontaneous association in the interest of public safety, were formed in the three kingdoms from the capital down to the smallest village. War against the French anarchists was the watchword of these committees. Mr Pitt did

not concede to them war, but he was obliged to concede severe measures for the repression of anarchical clubs and pamphlets. The tone of these committees became perforce the tone of government; it was necessary for the minister to personify in himself the spirit of conservatism in England, or to place the government in the hands of Mr Fox. To do this, was to bring about a revolution which would have surpassed that of 1688 by all which separates the balanced sovereignty of the three estates from the anarchical sovereignty of 1793; it was, for Mr Pitt, to betray the king, the people, the constitution. In the post where the confidence of the king, the people, and the parliament had placed him, he could not hesitate, and yet when the trial of Louis XVI. had already commenced, he still hesitated. To raise his hand against the French Revolution seemed to him, as he stated to his most intimate. confidants, a kind of sacrilege against that philosophical civilization and against those principles of liberty and of the dignity of nations which he had inherited from his father. These principles he had himself professed in the great questions in England, electoral reform, the equality of religions before the law, the abolition of slavery throughout the universe, the sovereignty of the nation in its parliaments, and, lastly, the fraternity of peoples in a system of maritime or continental peace. So long as the French nation did not itself commence war against England or against its closest allies upon the Continent, such as Holland, so long as the national Convention of France did not itself proclaim its radical incompati-

bility with the monarchies and the kings in neighbouring states, or so long as the scaffold of Louis XVI. did not raise the cry of blood against France, Mr Pitt was firmly resolved to temporize with France.

The dream of his youth had been, like that of the French political philosophers, like that of Mirabeau and Condorcet, a union of principles between the two European countries the most advanced in civilization, England and France. It cost him much himself to destroy this illusion of his policy. We find proofs of this in all the secret negociations of the period, between General Dumouriez and him, in Belgium and in Holland. But Fox could already perceive that his rival would forcibly be drawn into war by the increasing aggressions of France, by the too clearly foreseen murder of the royal family, by the action of the French emigrants upon public opinion in London, by the pressure of the majority in parliament which supported Pitt on condition that he should uphold the crown, and lastly, by the personal disposition of King George III., whom his title of king rendered the enemy of republicans.

It was from a foresight to this effect that Fox advocated in parliament, beforehand and with passion, the course of peace at any price; but the peace that Fox and his friends demanded, or rather commanded, in their speeches was not so much a peace as an alliance and union of interests between England and the French Demagogues. It may be conceived that such speeches, to which the demagogic reunions and agitations in London responded in the streets, were more adapted to irritate the majority and to alienate it

from peace than to convince it. Mr Pitt, during this period of the eloquence of Fox, was absent from parliament through a suspension of his title of member of the House of Commons; his friends alone were in their places to reply to Fox. They often, in their answers, went beyond the limits within which Mr Pitt wished to restrain the expression of the opinions of government. But when he resumed his seat in the House, Pitt found himself obliged either to disown his friends and to offend the monarchical majority, or to support those who had so faithfully supported him.

The last agonies of the trial of Louis XVI., and the axe already poised above his head, left on the other hand but little room for forbearance. The prime minister of a king could not excuse, in a royal parliament moved with pity, with horror, and with fear, the judges and the executioners of a king whose only crime was weakness. Fox and his friends felt that the execution of Louis XVI. would throw a tinge of blood upon their doctrines, and give to the party of war the unanimity of a public sentiment. They rose in virtuous indignation against the judges of the king, whom they themselves termed executioners rather than judges; they called upon the English government to send negociators to Paris to interpose between the Convention and its victim. Pitt and the majority rejected a proposition which, according to them, could have no other effect than to compromise England in an intervention which would be humiliating if not accepted, to connect her by diplomatic relations with an anarchical government which she had not yet recognized

to abase her if she employed entreaties, to force her to declare war if she imposed her mediation, and perhaps to accelerate the crime by the defial it would appear to throw against France. These reasonable motives, alleged by Pitt, caused the provoking rather than conciliating steps proposed by Fox to be almost unanimously rejected. The head of Louis XVI. fell on the scaffold January 21, 1793. A cry of horror arose from all the humane and equitable hearts in Europe. The Revolution, until then popular, had, by the massacres of September and by the murder of the king, arrayed against itself public feeling, the strength of the weak.

Immediately after this murder, Mr Pitt broke all the relations which he had until then kept up with the ministers of the Convention, through M. de Chauvelin and Maret, who still resided at intervals at London. They received an order to quit England. A royal message, presented and supported, on the 1st of April, 1793, by Pitt, demanded of the country the subsidies and recruitings necessary to support on the Continent the allies of England. The language of Pitt in this communication was solemn and sad; he spoke as a man who, in resolving upon war, still regrets peace, and does not altogether despair of regaining it. Fox, on this occasion, spoke to the same effect, so completely did the murder of the king command an unanimity of reprobation even in the Jacobins of London. He admitted that the hostilities of France against Holland

imposed on England the vote for subsidies and armaments. He held out only, like Pitt himself, some hopes of conciliation in the indirect negociations which Pitt was at that moment carrying on with Dumouriez, the general of the Convention, through the English ambassador in Holland. These negociations, which Dumouriez himself has since made public, and which we have under our eyes, attest that Pitt retained the last shreds of peace at the very moment when he was constrained to prepare for war.

But the Convention, which thenceforth no longer negociated excepting through the tribunal, the axe, and the cannon, did not await the issue of these negociations between Dumouriez and Pitt. It declared universal war to England, to Spain, to Holland, to the world, at the very time when Pitt and Fox were discussing at London the chances which remained of preserving peace.

Such was, in point of fact, the political conduct of Pitt in relation to the war which he was accused of having let loose, up to the spontaneous and irreconcilable explosion of the Convention, in February, 1793. For three years he had prevented the scourge; his hand alone, in Europe, was powerful enough with the British and European aristocracy to keep it back; at that very moment he did not scheme war, he suffered it. It came of itself to crush his policy, his alliances, his finances, his long prosperity. The Convention left him no choice; what would have become, in the hands of Pitt, of a monarchy humbly linked to a republic which declared itself in

actual hostility with all kings? What would a king of England, allied with the murderers of the king of France, have become in the opinion of Europe? Lastly, what would have become, on the Continent, of the credit of the English power if it had, with the indifference and the cowardice of egotism, left to the mercy of the Convention all its allies in Holland, Hanover, Spain, and Germany? Necessity, honour, which is also a necessity, the letter of treaties, the spirit of monarchies, the preservation of allies upon the Continent, basis of the moral nationality of England, and, lastly, patriotism, which should, when an empire is driven to extremities, be preferred to speculative philosophy, everything imposed the war of 1793 upon Mr Pitt. Had he anticipated it, he would have been an incendiary of Europe; if he had not accepted it, he would have been no patriot.

We shall shortly see that, if this first war of coalition against France was to him a necessity of circumstances, the second and the third were to him the necessity of a great policy. The first is beyond question; the others are open to discussion. Here it is conscience which decided, elsewhere it will be the genius of the statesman.

France, which in 1793 had already overflowed its boundaries into Savoy, at Nice, at Mayence, on the banks of the Rhine, and into Belgium, was preparing to overflow into Holland, and beyond the Pyrenees and the Alps. In a military point of view, Pitt might

have been reproached with having too long temporized; he had refused to act with Prussia, and, at a later period, with Austria; he had left to each of these powers, and, lastly, to Sardinia, to Spain, to Holland, to the princes and the electors on the banks of the Rhine, the whole weight of their respective wars against France. He could only combine in coalition forces which were already fatigued or discouraged by reverses. The Continent could have accused him with greater grounds of reason than France; he redeemed the delay by his energy and by his change of system. He frankly declared to his country that the war was about to cost it its treasures, its commerce, its blood, even to the failing of its strength; he exaggerated the sacrifices as though to exaggerate the patriotism and the glory.

England showed itself worthy of this frankness on the part of its statesman. A levy of 74,000 soldiers and marines above the ordinary strength of the army and the fleet; the troops of Hesse and of Hanover taken into the pay of England; an annual subsidy of £50,000,000 to the King of Sardinia, for the purpose of raising and maintaining 50,000 combatants on the Alps and on the Var; onerous treaties with Russia, Austria, Tuscany, the King of Naples, the King of Spain, the King of Portugal; a peremptory declaration against governments which pretended to remain neutral, such as Sweden and Denmark; a loan of £400,000,000 to maintain the war by land and by sea; new taxes imposed in every form upon all fortunes: such were the measures proposed by Pitt,

applauded by parliament, contested only by Fox, whose opposition became, from this epoch, no longer an opposition to a ministry, but a desperate opposition against his country. His country abandoned him, with Grey, Lord Lansdowne, Sheridan, and a small group of unseasonable orators, whose only policy was the spirit of detraction. Pitt, whom Burke had joined through virtue, as Windham through patriotism, had no longer need to speak. With the exception of the populace and of this small group of aristocratic agitators, the clients of foreign Jacobinism, the whole country spoke for him.

The agitations and the tumults raised by these chiefs of faction did not prevent Pitt from persevering in his doctrines of religious emancipation. In spite of the national prejudices, he granted the right of voting in elections to the Irish Catholics, who were at that time in full Jacobin agitation.

In the mean while the Girondins, who in France had survived Louis XVI. for a few days, after their deplorable concession to the Jacobins, had in their turn fallen on the 31st of May, and lost their heads on the scaffold. The terror, the Girondin insurrection in the South and in Calvados, the betrayal and defection of Dumouriez, the sanguinary delirium of Marat, the system, cold as the axe, of universal proscription adopted by Robespierre, the daily executions organized as a revolutionary institution in Paris, the alternate disasters and exploits of our

armies in the North, the Royalist and religious risings in Vendée, bankruptcy, dearth, the penury in our finances, appeared to punish France for the war declared by the Convention, and to justify Pitt. This was the moment chosen by Fox to make new harangues and bring forward new motions against the war. Burke, Windham, Pitt, had no difficulty in showing in these harangues a real treason against the country, and a signal of mistrust from the English tribune to the coalition; the Convention replied to this speech by declaring Pitt the *enemy of the human race.*

Pitt, nevertheless, continued to flatter himself that the exhaustion of order, of gold, and of blood in France would inevitably bring it back to conditions of government inoffensive towards Europe. Burke alone, whose mind was the more lucid for not being obstructed with details and business, prophesied a war to the death between the modern principles, which he termed barbarism, and the traditional principles, which he termed civilization. He was, like the Count de Maistre subsequently, the implacable Jeremiah of religions and of thrones. He announced social calamities which would make the sun stand still in the heavens. More a declaimer than a statesman, he exaggerated everything, even fear, to give to the Royalists the convulsions of despair.

The Jacobin movements in Ireland, Scotland, and England seemed to afford a verification of these prophecies; the harangues of Fox and Sheridan had raised

the tempest. A radical association, under the title of *British Convention of the delegates of the people*, had become organized under the auspices and in imitation of the French Convention. It fomented petitions, meetings, and popular tumults, which made the ground tremble.

Whilst France, on the 9th Thermidor, was stirring the blood of the Jacobins, and whilst its armies were delivering Toulon, Pitt was declaring in the tribune that the re-establishment of monarchy in France would by no means be made by him a preliminary condition for peace, but that he would be ready to advise and to sign peace so soon as a regular humane and stable government might offer a guarantee for the security of Europe. The wisdom of these words did not disarm English Jacobinism, more radical and more obstinate than that of Paris.

The revolutionary movement in England is admirably reproduced in the *Histoire Parlementaire*.

"The revolutionary societies persisted in their endeavours to transform England into a republic. With their eyes turned upon France, it was by means of a convention that they wished to operate this change, and the addresses of the clubs, the provocations of an unbridled press, the deliberations of popular assemblies, the placards posted in public places, tended more or less directly to this result. The government was upon their guard. At Edinburgh they caused considerable collections of arms to be seized. At London itself they ordered the arrest of the secretaries of two of the principal societies; one of them, the

celebrated Hardy, was a shoemaker. They also seized their registers and all their papers, and the information obtained by means of these led to other arrests. Eight persons were committed for trial, after having been examined before the Privy Council. Without awaiting the issue of these prosecutions, the government hastened to communicate to parliament the discoveries which had been made. A royal message invited the House of Commons to adopt those measures which might appear from this communication to be necessary. On the motion of Pitt a secret committee was elected by ballot, to examine the documents found at the houses of the conspirators, and to make the necessary suggestions in consequence. Two days afterwards, Pitt himself presented, in the name of this committee, a report in which, after demonstrating the existence of a vast conspiracy which had long been schemed to overthrow the constitution, he proposed, as a means of public safety, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, that famous guarantee of individual liberty. The opposition brought all its energy to combat the conclusions of this report. Fox, Grey, and Sheridan undertook the justification of the societies; they ventured to assert that their proceedings were perfectly legal, perfectly constitutional; that there was nothing but what was regular and pacific in their appeals to a convention; that their efforts to reform what they considered as abuses in the social organization of the country were not more reprehensible than those which had recently been made, to obtain parliamentary reform, by other societies which were

then promoted by the Duke of Richmond and by Pitt himself; that the ministers, by spreading unfounded alarm, proposed merely to wrest from the terrors of parliament resolutions which were without doubt dangerous, since they struck at the keystone of the Constitution, but which were necessary for the prolongation of their tottering power. Imputations of duplicity, of apostasy, were not spared to Pitt. Sheridan, faithful to his custom of mingling sarcasm and irony with the most vehement invective, affected to compare the British cabinet, calling for a kind of dictatorship to save the country, to the Committee of Public Safety under the Convention, and to draw a parallel between Barrère and Pitt. The exaggeration of these attacks made their refutation easy. Dundas had no difficulty in showing that the suspension of individual liberty, regarded by the opponents as an unheard-of violation of the Constitution, had been voted more than once under circumstances of less gravity than those which had then occurred. Windham, with his caustic humour, ridiculed the far-fetched comparison which had been drawn between the projects of destruction ruminated by the anarchists and the plans of legal reform mediated at other periods by statesmen; he laid down the principle that the strength of the government should always bear a relation to the contingencies it might have to provide against, and he drew from it the conclusion that if the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was not sufficient to give it this strength, they should not hesitate to go beyond this point.

"Fox, affecting to take in its literal sense this expression of an orator whose daring and paradoxical mind constantly led him to exaggerate the views of his party, inquired with warmth how far then they intended to go, to what point they proposed to carry the horrible imitation of the French Jacobins; whether the ministers, proposing to reign like them by terror, had the intention of suppressing trial by jury; whether they did not fear to drive the nation to extremities; whether they did not understand that to manifest so much dread was to encourage the enemy? Pitt, little moved by these oratorical outbursts, the empty exaggeration of which he pointed out, demonstrated, by a calm and lucid exposition of facts, the anarchical and criminal tendency of the revolutionary societies. Without assuming, like Windham, a uselessly provoking tone, he declared that the government would never flinch before its enemies, and that, though fully decided not to carry his measures beyond the limit of what was necessary, he would not fail to proportion them to this limit. In vain the opposition endeavoured at least to delay the vote of the House by raising incidental questions and by profiting, with wonderful subtlety, by the facilities which the complicated form of the deliberations afforded them for this purpose; it could bring only 28 votes against the bill, which, when carried before the House of Lords, met there but nine opponents. A few days afterwards the two Houses, by an address in which the Lords took the initiative, expressed to the king their firm determination not to refuse any of the extraordinary powers that might be

considered indispensable in order to restrain the factions."

These convulsive movements, and those which it was feared might burst out at London, fortified Pitt instead of shaking his position. The instinct of self-preservation became embodied in his name. The Duke of Portland, Mr Windham, and all the Whig patriots rallied around him; the fresh triumphs of France under the Directory rendering evident the necessity for union, Fox, Grey, Sheridan, and Lansdowne held out almost alone against the minister of public safety. An army of demagogues from the suburbs of London, and from the manufacturing towns, under the leadership of a shoemaker named Hardy, and of the celebrated literary agitator named Horne Tooke, seconded them by its turbulence. The juries, intimidated by the disturbances, acquitted them. The populace bore them in triumph from the tribunal, as Marat, crowned with laurels, had been borne from the prisoner's stool of the Convention. The restless minds at home, discouraged by the victories of France abroad, were tempted from lassitude to sue for peace.

Wilberforce, the friend of Pitt, urged this peace through a philanthropy which, at such a time, resembled weakness; his example carried away all those who had sided for war through anger and not through patriotism; Pitt had some trouble in retaining his shaken majority. Fox profited by his weakness to declaim against a minister indifferent, as he said, to

the sufferings of humanity. The invasion of Holland by General Pichegru, and the desertion of Prussia by the peace concluded between it and France, at Bâle, on the 5th April, 1795, completed the consternation of the party of Pitt. Fox and his friends triumphed in all this with that accent of secret and perverse satisfaction which the prophets of evil cannot disguise when they perceive their anticipations cruelly verified in the calamities of their country. The parliament, nevertheless, further granted to the minister of war 100,000 men for the fleet, and 150,000 men for the army and the militia.

Some maritime successes compensated Pitt for the disasters of the continental coalition, half beaten, half dissolved. The English Admiral Hotham, in the Corsican waters, and the Admiral Bridport, in sight of Orient, defeated two French squadrons, and took from us five vessels of the line and 4000 prisoners. Another squadron landed a body of French emigrants at Quiberon; this descent, fatal for the emigrants who disembarked, was for a long time the odious text of a calumnious accusation against Mr Pitt. The Republicans and the Royalists, after the massacre of Quiberon, combined their resentments, the first in accusing Pitt of having sent upon French soil an army bent on civil war, the second of having landed them in order that they might fall victims to the sword of the Republicans, and to rid himself by this cowardly subterfuge of numerous officers of the French marine who had emigrated to London, and who were thus sent to their death by their jealous auxiliaries.

The truth, too well established at the present day by the most explicit documents, and especially by the memoirs of the Count de Vauban, is that Pitt yielded only after extreme resistance to the importunities of the French princes who had taken refuge in London, and to those of the chiefs of the emigration, and of La Vendée, who accused him of neutralizing their valour and of fearing their success in Brittany. One should be mistrustful of the vanquished in civil wars; they have no scruple in employing calumny, or in exhibiting ingratitude, to throw upon their most devoted auxiliaries their faults or their reverses. But serious and impartial history sooner or later reveals the truth.

The truth, in regard to the fatal expeditions of Quiberon and Ile-Dieu, is now seen in the very reproaches of resistance to these expeditions, which the emigrant chiefs address with so much bitterness to the government of Mr Pitt, in their memoirs. The Count de Puisaye, the first author of this plan of combined disembarkment on the coast of Brittany, states that he spent unsuccessfully three years in negociations, voyages to London, and intercessions with the ministry of Mr Pitt, before obtaining this co-operation so much begged of the English government. He ended by creating in the government of Mr Pitt the illusion which he had created in himself, and by persuading him that all Brittany, on the appearance of their first sails, would rise in favour of its legitimate princes; he promised to cause to be occupied without resistance the impregnable peninsula of Quiberon, which was to be made the head-quarters and the basis

of the operations of the Anglo-French invasion. These statements, which were true so far as related to the occupation of the peninsula of Quiberon, had at length determined England to furnish vessels, arms, money, ammunition, transports: 80,000 muskets to arm the *paysans* of Brittany, a numerous artillery, engineers, four French regiments in the pay of England, a body of English marines, an imposing fleet, immense supplies of provisions; were the contingent given by Mr Pitt to the expedition of the French princes. Certainly, at a period when Stofflet, Charette, Puisaye and all the Vendéen or Breton chiefs were already struggling with advantage against the armies of the Republic, and when they might, by combining upon the coast adjacent to Quiberon, have protected the descent of the Count d'Artois with 100,000 heroic men, such an expedition had, in the opinion of Mr Pitt, every chance of success, and scarce a chance of failure. It is the raving of calumny and ingratitude, this accusation of having laid at Quiberon an infernal trap to cause the massacre of a few officers of the French navy who had joined the expedition; officers without ships and without country, from whom England had nothing to fear, and who were on the contrary sold beforehand by their opinions as by their interests, since they were in England's pay.

"To whom then are we to attribute the disaster of Quiberon?" inquires the Count de Vauban, himself a general of the Breton Royalists, in his remarkable memoirs. "Is it to the English Admiral Warren, who was charged to transport and to land us, in case we

ourselves should desire it? He had been ordered by his government to risk nothing, to furnish us with immense supplies loyally and liberally lavished upon us; an admiral who fulfilled this mission with so much zeal, activity, and devotion to our cause. Where is the man who could say to him, Might you not have done more or better than you did? All that the English ministry and the English navy could do was done. It remained for us to make a good use of our opportunities; why did we ourselves act in such a manner as to render inevitable a disastrous end?

"Several millions in gold, 80,000 muskets, 80 pieces of cannon, accoutrements for 60,000 men, provisions for a whole army during a year, powder sufficient for the use of all the Royal and Catholic armies during two years, cannon-balls, bullets, ammunition waggons, artillerymen, engineers, artillery horses; all was landed, received, and stored, and this as we had promised, without firing a shot.

"When, owing to the discord and unskilfulness of the two emigrant generals charged with acting after this favourable disembarkment, everything was lost, and the shattered remains of the emigration imprisoned or routed upon the peninsula were reduced to perish in port or to capitulate, Admiral Warren sent one of the captains of his squadron, bearing a flag of truce, to demand and insist upon an exchange of prisoners, or to offer such ransom and terms as it might please the enemy to suggest; this negociator had the order to accept any condition which might be imposed, in order to save the lives of the Frenchmen,

prisoners of Hoche. M. de Sombreuil, commanding the Royalists who had disembarked, and the naval officers, were particularly recommended to the intervention of the English negociator. Can we impute to the bad faith of Mr Pitt the massacre in cold blood of 3000 French prisoners at the hands of their compatriots? Was it Mr Pitt who could inspire such atrocities to civil war, or even foresee them? Civil wars explain but too cruelly all the mutual crimes of adverse parties."

It was the same in the case of the Ile-Dieu expedition, a few months afterwards; it was yielded to with difficulty by Mr Pitt, on the importunities of the emigrants and of the Count d'Artois, their prince and their chief, who embarked in order to command them. Money, arms, ammunition, squadrons, were lavished upon him without reserve; but this prince, immovable on his vessels and at Ile-Dieu, in face of his country to be reconquered, was kept back by the courtiers who surrounded him, deceived the hopes of the Bretons, and secretly solicited through his agent in London, the Duke of Harcourt, an order recalling him to England, and which Mr Pitt accorded only to the importunity of the Duke of Harcourt. These very men, whose timid counsels ruined the expedition of Quiberon and that of Ile-Dieu, did not blush, after the restoration of the Bourbons in France, to throw upon Mr Pitt and upon England the opprobrium of an ambush against the emigration and against the navy of France, of which all the responsibility rested but too justly on themselves.

But it is thus that refugees of all causes, at the mercy of the enemies of their country, from whom they demand arms, revenge themselves for their reverses by calumnies against their allies, and repay with the blackest ingratitude the services which an illicit policy has wished to render to civil war. The blood of Quiberon should fall only on the intriguers who, through the obsession of the French princes, wrested from Mr Pitt his consent to this expedition, and upon the hesitation of the prince amongst them, who was afterwards Charles X. The emigrants of his court, even after the Restoration, continued to nourish this public prejudice of the premeditated sacrifice of our naval officers through the treachery of the English at Quiberon; an absurdity of party from which common sense, justice, and history for ever clear the name of Pitt.

The year 1795 was unfortunate for the coalition: the Executive Directory, who had succeeded in the government of the French Republic to the Committee of Public Safety, governed by victory, instead of governing by terror. This government of the Directory, which bore the weight of past misfortunes, and which subsequently bore in history the weight of the calumnies of the military party, to which it fell a victim, is not yet in its true historical light. The truth is that it pacified at home, that it organized victory abroad, that it reinstated in mass the proscribed into their country and their goods, that it restored religions to

the liberty of consciences, their only right and their only dignity, and that it signed the preliminaries of peace or treaties with all the powers of the continent, discouraged by their defeats.

The continent, with the exception of Austria and Russia, forsook Mr Pitt; England appeared ready to forsake him. It was loudly demanding peace. King George III., insulted by the London populace on the 26th October, 1795, as he proceeded to open parliament, was only saved from death through a charge of cavalry. His state carriage, attacked during the sitting by the vociferators for peace, was broken in pieces under the eyes of his guards. Everything indicated one of those ferments of popular opinion which in England command changes of policy. Pitt yielded to it beforehand in the speech from the throne, by declaring that if the new republican rule which was becoming established in France persevered in an attitude which reassured Europe, England would be ready to enter into negociations for peace with the Executive Directory. This declaration satisfied the public wish; Wilberforce himself applauded it; the dignity of a great people would not allow it to rush into peace without discussion and without guarantees. Fox and Sheridan, in demanding more, were abandoned by the House and by the people. Their unbecoming impatience for an alliance with France almost repopularized Mr Pitt. The indignation consequent upon the outrages suffered by the king in the streets brought back the great mass of good citizens to the defence of the threatened government. Pitt profited

by this newly-tempered opinion to demand of parliament stringent laws against the disturbers of order; the urgency and the peril caused them to be granted.

Fox clumsily opposed them in open sedition; he forgot himself so far as to give the signal to the factions of the country, by saying that, if he were questioned as to the obedience due by the people to these laws, he should answer that *it was not for the citizens a question of duty, but one of prudence;* that meant and said clearly enough to the people that, if they were strong enough to brave the laws, they should have the audacity to do so. Pitt felt that he held his enemy in open legal revolt, and started to his feet in order to bear witness against this flagrant instance of sedition. The indignation of the House anticipated the words which fell with all the weight of the law and of eloquence upon Fox.

"I should consider myself," cried Pitt, "I should consider myself forgetful of my obligations as a member of parliament, of my sentiments as a man, of my attachment for my sovereign, of my profound veneration for the Constitution, if I did not express the horror with which such principles inspire me. We should, nevertheless, congratulate ourselves upon the frankness which Mr Fox has just exhibited in his language. The House and the country can now appreciate his actions by his words, and judge of the respect which he professes for the laws and for parliament. All the true friends of the Constitution will be better able to understand from this how much they are called upon to unite in its defence." Fox wished

to explain: he had spoken, said he, only of the hypothetical case, in which the bills might be voted by a corrupt majority in parliament, in opposition to the wishes of the great national majority. As was observed by Windham, this pretended explanation was far from removing the purport of an appeal to revolt, which, moreover, Sheridan and Grey renewed in no less violent terms. These outbursts, although supported beyond the precincts of the House by a powerful agitation, and by petitions covered with 100,000 signatures, to which the ministry could scarcely oppose 30,000, obtained with difficulty, made but little impression upon parliament. Such was the disposition of minds in one portion of the House of Commons, that the government was even accused of having too long delayed in proposing means of defence against the factions subversive of the Constitution.

Pitt, sufficiently armed against internal disturbances, hastened to disarm his policy abroad; he sent a negociator, Mr Wickham, to confer at Bâle with the French negociator, M. Barthélémy, a man whose moderation and loyalty encouraged the idea of peace. Mr Wickham, in the name of Mr Pitt, demanded a congress, in which all the powers allied with England would be admitted to discuss the general arrangement of the affairs of Europe, and in which compensations or restitutions of conquered territories might form the basis of a peace. The Directory

would only agree to a separate peace with England, and required, as a preliminary, the recognition of all the conquests of the armies of the Republic on the Continent. Mr Pitt could not, with any regard for the dignity of his country, and for all his promises to the nations coalesced and allied with England, accept these essential conditions. The negociation, thus refused by France, broke down at the first step. England did not impute this failure to its minister, but to the obstinacy of the Directory. Fox alone, having odiously accused Pitt on account of this involuntary want of success, was disclaimed even by the opposition. Burke undertook on his side to justify the ministry by contrary accusations. He published letters against peace with the regicides, the letters of a Cato of royalty, in which he reproached the ministry with weakness, and demanded war to the death against the French Revolution. Burke at that time represented in England that exaggeration of the ultra-royalists which we have subsequently seen represented in France; a party without limits, without transaction, without peace, which reposes in the attitude of heroism upon an arbitrary principle, and whose only force is in high-sounding words. These parties ruin all the causes which they take up. It is the radicalism of patricians.

But it was useful to Mr Pitt to be attacked by Burke. Burke destroyed the popularity of those whom he praised; he had never been a statesman. Pitt left to him the domain of monarchical and religious declamation; he knew that the government of empires

is but a mean of prudence and of appreciation between philosophy and facts. That which does not bend to facts is not politics, but literature. Burke was but a man of letters in parliament.

THE Directory, however, had only to congratulate itself upon having refused any concession to England; it triumphed everywhere, in war or in peace. Jourdan and Moreau were again crossing the Rhine, with two armies, which marched to meet each other in the heart of Austria, in Bohemia. Bonaparte was conquering Italy; Prussia, without fidelity to England, and even without German patriotism, was contemplating in inactivity the struggle of the Archduke Charles against the French, caring only, according to custom, to have some of the spoils appropriated to itself; lastly, the king of Spain, without family spirit and without dignity as a sovereign, was concluding an offensive alliance with the Republic against his ally England.

Pitt, betrayed by fortune and feeling his own country failing him, sent Lord Malmesbury to treat upon peace at Paris with the Executive Directory. Lord Malmesbury proposed, in the name of his government, the restitution of all the colonies of which France had been deprived during the long war; he demanded in return the evacuation of Italy by France, and the independence of Holland. The Directory replied to these propositions only by the injunction to Lord Malmesbury to quit Paris within 24

hours. During this second attempt at negociation, a French squadron left the *râde de Brest* with an army commanded by Hoche, and to be landed in Ireland for the purpose of there raising an insurrection. A storm dispersed the squadron, and the Irish insurrection was stifled in the blood of its turbulent patriots. But the finances of England were failing under the difficulties, and from the want of specie at the bank; the fleet of Admiral Howe, anchored at Portsmouth, had mutinied in imitation of the revolutionary committees of London; the fleet, fallen into the power of subaltern officers and sailors, held England during three weeks under the cannon of its own vessels. The government appeased it only by means of gold.

This example of triumphant insubordination spread the mutiny to the fleet at Plymouth; 11 vessels of the line and 13 frigates had driven away their admiral, and no longer recognized any authority but that of a committee of sailors. This committee already talked of blockading the Thames, of making sail for a port of France, or of bombarding the ports; England scarcely breathed; the intrepidity of Pitt braved the peril, and triumphed by the authority of the nation over these parricides. The sailors, terrified by their crime and by the reprobation of their country, gave up their chiefs, who were hung to the yard-arm before the eyes of their accomplices. The fleet expiated its attempt by its victories under Admiral Duncan, who defeated the Dutch squadron of the Texel, and captured from it eight vessels of the line.

But Austria, in its turn abandoning the coalition, was signing the preliminaries of peace at Léoben with the Republic. There remained to England but herself and Mr Pitt; never perhaps did an island so materially imperceptible on the face of the globe occupy in itself alone so vast a place in the political economy of the world. England against Asia in India, England against America in the United States, against Africa at the Cape of Good Hope and in Egypt; lastly, England against nearly the whole of the European continent—Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Prussia, and Austria. Any one but Pitt would have been dizzy in this prodigious isolation. It is there that he was as grand as is the policy of his country; he lived his solitude, and he threw himself into it without fear. Perhaps Hannibal had a similar foresight and resolution for Carthage. But excepting in Hannibal and Mr Pitt, we do not find in history so impassive an intrepidity of mind. This policy was sublime in character, it is to be shown that it was also sublime in conception.

Pitt examined the situation alone and without a confidant. So long as France had been simply revolutionary, and had contented herself with overthrowing and reconstructing her institutions at home, with the convulsions, the ruins, the violence, and the reactions which ever accompany those periods of the regeneration of peoples, Mr Pitt had shrunk from war. He had done so for two reasons: firstly, as we have seen, because war is war, and he considered it equally

fatal to the development of civilization in either country; secondly, because the liberal principles of the sovereignity of the people, and of constitutional limits to be laid down to the absolute power of kings, to feudal aristocracy, to a dominant church, were the principles which he had received from his education at the hands of his father, and because he thought it little in accordance with the character of free England to combat in France the constitutional progress of liberty. He had therefore long endeavoured to avoid war, and he had made sincere efforts to treat with France on other conditions than the betrayal of his allies on the Continent and the extinction of the legitimate influence of his country.

But it was evident to the eyes of any clear-sighted statesman, that the French Revolution had for some time past been changing its predominant passion; tired of the storms of liberty, which require moderation and perseverance, France was turning to the passion for military glory, which demands only fire and heroism. Humiliated by her anarchies and by her excesses at home, she was throwing herself into her armies; she was expiating on battle-fields the ignominy of her scaffolds; she was overflowing her frontiers of the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, of the Escaut even, she was contained only by seas; she was evidently about to become a conqueror, from despair in not having known how to enjoy her freedom. Already were seen appearing at the head of her armies military popularities such as those of Moreau, of Bernadotte, of Massena, of Soult, of Pichegru, of Bonaparte, which

eclipsed all the civil popularities, either executed, or dead, or proscribed, or discredited. From amongst these military popularities, was there not some general more ambitious, more unscrupulous, more unbridled in glory and daring than the others, who would attempt to sieze the civil sovereignty of the Directory and of the two Councils, and would he not pass the Rubicon, behind which there was not even a Pompey? This no longer appeared doubtful to Pitt; he was too sagacious, too attentive, and too reflective not to have judged, during these eight years of study and antagonism, of the character of the great nation which he had to moderate or to combat; he saw clearly that France had impetuosity for anything, but perseverance for nothing, excepting for the glory of arms; he knew that this people, as fiery in the reaction as in the effort, never conquered their liberty but to tire of having conquered it and to dread their victory; that no sooner were they in the enjoyment of their own sovereignty, but they sought a master, even were he a tyrant, to whom they might yield it, and that a glorious tyranny was, after such cruel deceptions, the only institution of which they were capable. Victory, in Italy, had already pointed out, sufficiently obviously, this future master.

The young Bonaparte, whose name already resounded like that of a Monk or a Cromwell, appeared to him more like a man of the stamp of Marius, Sylla, or Cæsar. Pitt, perfectly well informed by his secret agents on the Continent and even within the camps, could see in this young man the whole constitution of France; thus, to him, this constitution personified in

a soldier could only be the military omnipotence of the French army.

Could England treat with the French Revolution transformed into a soldier, and on the conditions of a monopoly of universal domination of the European continent abandoned to a French Cæsar? Merely to place this question before Mr Pitt was to resolve it: Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Prussia, Spain, Austria, and soon perhaps Russia, being left to the mercy of French arms or of French ascendency, with the consent of England, what would England become? She would become the laughing-stock of the Continent, impotency established at a few leagues across the sea from her rival mistress of the world, the accomplice by cowardice, or at least the complaisant by humility, of the unrestricted domination of France; an island still imposing by its vessels upon distant seas, but to whom the caprice of France might open or close at will the ports of the Continent, from Cadiz to Cronstadt. Under such conditions of political and commercial existence in Europe, it would have been better for England to emigrate from her three little islands to Asia, and to transport her empire, her aristocracy, her government, and her commerce, to the East Indies. She, at least, would not have been so near to her impotency, her abdication, and her disgrace.

Such were, in reality, the political conditions which would have resulted from an unequal and humiliating peace made by Great Britain with military France. No English statesman, and especially no statesman

proud of the rank of his country in the universe, could in good faith conclude such a peace, excepting Mr Fox. It may well be thought that from that day a war to the utmost, a desperate war, a patriotic war, was in point of fact foreseen and accepted by the Hannibalian genius of Mr Pitt. Let us in thought place ourselves in the position of this great man, and ask ourselves whether he had for his country and for his own glory any alternative but war or ignominy.

Nevertheless he consented again to send Lord Malmesbury to confer at Lille with French plenipotentiaries. Lord Malmesbury consented to abandon to France the conquests which had been made in Germany, in Belgium, in Savoy, and Italy; he offered to France the restitution of her colonies; he demanded only, in compensation, the cession of the islands and territories that England had taken from Spain and Holland during the war which these powers had carried on against her in conjunction with France. An understanding on this point appeared likely; when the *coup d' état* of the 18th Fructidor, by plunging the Directory into a fiercer republicanism, made it more imperious and more exacting. Everything was for the second time roughly broken off; Bonaparte a few days afterwards signed the treaty of Campo-Formio, which deprived Austria of a portion of Italy, yielded to her by a disloyal compensation the independence of Venice, and took from her the Netherlands.

England, sharing the indignation of her prime

minister at the rupture of the conferences at Lille, approved of the fruitless efforts of Mr Pitt to obtain a dignified peace. Mr Fox and his friends alone insisted upon an unworthy peace. Their harangues, disowned by the public feeling, only injured themselves; they were considered too French for Englishmen, their opposition had destroyed in them all decency of patriotism, and they were obliged to withdraw from parliament, as men who in despair will no longer participate in the councils of their country, and who protest by their absence. They soon, however, returned, in order to contest with Mr Pitt all the subsidies and all the armaments necessary for the situation. One is surprised, in reading these annals of England in 1798, that the name of Fox should have survived so many faults and such strenuous opposition to the interests of his country; but party-spirit has its mysteries that human reason cannot explain.

One of the coadjutors of Fox, the orator Tierney, having declared that his party would reject, as hostile to liberty, everything proceeding from the ministry, Mr Pitt could not on this occasion restrain his anger; he vented it with indignation upon an enmity which, in order to reach a man, would render the country helpless. A duel followed this reciprocal outrage. Tierney fired upon Mr Pitt, and missed him; Pitt refused to fire upon a disarmed enemy. During these debates and these armaments at London, General Bonaparte had landed in Egypt with an army of 40,000 men. This expedition, profitless to a country like France, not possessing the empire of the seas,

and which would be imprisoned within its conquest, was evidently consequent upon the personal policy of the Directory and General Bonaparte. The Directory wished, by sending him to a distance, to rid itself of a general who had become too popular, and who troubled it by his inaction in France after the peace of Campo-Formio; the young conqueror of Italy wished to raise his name, no matter upon what theatre. That of Egypt had appeared to him most full of *prestige* and renown; such was the sole explanation of this expedition. It gave no vital blow to England, and it decimated France of its best troops and its best generals; but political inconsequences have sometimes a hidden meaning; the hidden meaning here was the fortune of Bonaparte.

In this crisis of his life Pitt found in Nelson a second Pitt. It was necessary to raise the naval pride of England by one of those blows which avenge many reverses. Nelson struck this blow in the bay of Aboukir, on the 1st August; this second battle of Actium, which assured to Pitt the empire of the seas, destroyed in that bay 13 vessels of the line and the innumerable ships which, two days previously, had landed Bonaparte on the shores of the Ptolemies. Nearly the whole navy of France had been sunk by the cannon of Nelson and of Pitt on reaching Egypt; sonorous victories, fruitless campaigns, and an inevitable capitulation were the only prospects of this ill-judged expedition. The hymn of England arose to the glory

of the minister and of the hero of Aboukir. The emperor of Russia, irritated by the enterprise of Bonaparte against the order of the Knights of Malta, which he foolishly pretended to re-establish under his own auspices, and Austria, encouraged by the rupture of the congress of Rastadt, where the plenipotentiaries of the Directory had been mysteriously assassinated, entered into a fresh coalition with Pitt; the Sultan, gratuitously outraged in his Egyptian possessions, joined in this league against the French, who until then had been his allies; Naples even, supported by Nelson and by Austria, declared war. Pitt, backed by the impulses of his country, ventured to demand and obtained from parliament an income-tax, the only equitable and moral impost, which proportions the sacrifice to the means possessed by individuals. This tax, generously consented to by the English aristocracy, furnished £250,000,000 to the war. Fox opposed it during some time, in spite of its being the most democratic of taxes, taking the burden from the people and placing it on the rich. The king, indignant at the intrigues of his former minister, who was wont now to propose at banquets the health of the sovereign people against the triple sovereignty of the parliament, struck his name from the list of his privy-councillors, this being a dignity reserved to all former ministers. Pitt did not participate in this undignified renunciation of the name of Fox, but on the contrary persuaded the king against it, as an appearance of persecution likely to bestow a greater popularity upon this head of the opposition amongst the demagogues of his sect.

It was amidst these preoccupations of war and internal agitations that he had the audacity to propose, and to carry in parliament, the *Union* of the Irish and English legislatures in a single parliament. Fox and Sheridan could only bring 19 votes against him; his rational eloquence overpowered even the murmurs of an absorbed nationality. On the Continent, as well as in Asia, everything seconded his fortune. Souwaroff gained in Italy the victory of Trebbia; the Archduke Charles drove back the French to the Rhine and the lake of Zurich; Tippoo-Saib, sovereign of Mysore, perished on the threshold of his capital; Bonaparte failed, after seven assaults, before the miserable fortified village of Saint Jean d'Acre, defended by the Turks under an English commodore, Sydney Smith, and a French emigrant. He took refuge in revolt against the Directory, re-entered France, conspired against the civil power which had raised him, enlisted the army upon his side, and seizing arbitrary power under the name of consul, justified the anticipations of Pitt by crowning in himself not the Revolution, but the army.

It was at this period that Pitt took upon himself alone, most rashly but most politicly, the responsibility of a war without truce against the omnipotence of military France. What he had foreseen had happened; France was now only an army; this army had now only one chief; this chief, young and ambitious, could only increase and gain strength by the movement which had raised him to the supreme power. The Revolution, transformed into conquest under Bonaparte, condemned Pitt to combat unto the death, or to sub-

ordinate his country to the French Cæsar. It was difficult for Pitt at that moment to make his country understand the stoicism and the prodigious grandeur of his resolution.

THE part to be taken by Bonaparte after the 18th Brumaire was a double one; it was necessary that he should, at home, assume to govern in a pacific spirit, in order to secure popularity with the interests of commerce and property. In regard to the armies, he had to point his finger towards Italy, Austria, Prussia, the limits of the Continent, and to prepare them for universal invasion. It was at this price that the army placed the empire to his hands.

Thus, at the onset it was his policy to allow France to rest and take breath in attempts, in hopes, in illusions of peace. He hastened to give great *éclat* to his pacific intentions; he wrote with his own hand a philosophical letter to the King of England, George III., although he knew perfectly well that, under the British Constitution, a direct communication to the king, irresponsible for his government, was vain and unconstitutional. He caused M. de Talleyrand to write to Lord Grenville, the minister for Foreign Affairs. Pitt and Lord Grenville replied by a positive refusal to suspend military operations so long as France did not desist from her pretensions as expressed at Lille, and offered no other guarantees to Europe than a government of yesterday which might give place to a government of to-morrow. Bona-

parte wrote with the same ostentation of pacific sentiments to the Emperor of Austria; and received the same reply. He exhibited these replies before the country, in order to establish a character for moderation and forbearance, and to show that if war was a scourge, this scourge could not be attributed to him. This appearance was true in the first months of his consulate; England and Austria might have taken him at his word, and, for a time, have pacified the world; the genius of Pitt was to understand that it could only be for a time, and would deliver the world more certainly to the ambition of the soldier master of France.

In the truly prophetic speech that Pitt pronounced in replying to Fox, this statesman seems to have anticipated history in reading the yet unrevealed character of the dictator of France; never has the infallibility of reflection in this policy shone forth in more prophetic terms.

"And upon what foundations," replied he to the friends of Fox, anxious to produce in their country the dangerous illusion of peace, and to find a Washington in a Cæsar, "upon what foundations could we think that Bonaparte should be interested in concluding a solid peace? With his personal character, under the circumstances which have raised him to power, has he any other guarantee for the preservation of this power than that which he finds in his sword? Is he bound to the soil, to the affections, to the customs, to the prejudices of the country? For France he is but a stranger and an usurper; he unites in his person all that a pure Republican should detest, all

that a fanatical Jacobin has renounced, all that a sincere and faithful Royalist should resent as an insult. Whatever be the obstacles which he finds in his path, to what does he appeal? To his fortune; in other terms, to his army and his sword. Placing all his resources, all his confidence, in the support of the army, can he allow his military renown to fade, the recollection of his exploits to become obscured? Is it certain that, the moment the invasion of neighbouring countries might be impossible, he would be able to maintain a sufficient force to support his power? Having no other aim but the possession of absolute power, no other passion but that of military glory, can he take a sufficient interest in the maintenance of peace for it to become possible for us to lay down our arms, to reduce our expenses, to relinquish, on the faith of our engagements, those measures which constitute our security? Can we believe that after having signed peace he would not remember with bitterness the trophies of Egypt torn from his grasp by the glorious victory of Aboukir, and the exploits of that handful of English sailors whose influence and example made the Turks invincible in Saint Jean d'Acre? Can he forget that the result of those exploits has placed Austria and Russia in a position to recover in one campaign all that France had conquered, has dispelled the charm which had for a moment fascinated Europe, and has proved to the powers that their generals, fighting in a just cause, can eclipse the most dazzling triumphs of an insatiable ambition? With all these recollections pro-

foundly graven upon his mind, if, after a year or eighteen months of peace, the symptoms were manifested of another Irish insurrection, encouraged by the re-establishment of free communications with France, and by a new infusion of the principles of Jacobinism; if at that moment we had no fleet to watch the ports of France or to guard the coasts of Ireland, no available army, no embodied militia; if, on his side, Bonaparte had the means of transporting to our soil twenty or thirty thousand soldiers, can we think that, under so powerful a temptation, his ambitious and vindictive mind would allow itself to be stopped by the clauses of a treaty? In the event of some crisis, some new danger, happening to threaten the Ottoman empire, without an English squadron being within reach, without an alliance being formed, a united force to succour it, the opportunity being thus presented to renew the expedition of Egypt, to conquer and to colonize that fine country, to prepare the means of giving a fatal blow to the vital interests of England, and of pillaging the treasures of the East, what would be our safeguard? Would it be the well-understood interest of Bonaparte, his principles, his moderation, his love for peace, his horror of conquests, his respect for the independence of other peoples, that would guarantee us against an attempt of such a nature as to place us under the alternative either of suffering certain disgrace and damage without resistance, or of recommencing the struggle which we had too soon ended, and of recommencing it without allies, and with fewer resources to face greater difficulties and adverse chances."

The English nation listened for the last time to its oracle, and voted the subsidies and the armaments necessary for the isolation which was advised by Pitt.

To incorporate more firmly the three kingdoms in the national unity, more essential than ever to the common safety, Pitt renewed in the midst of the tempest his proposition of the union of Ireland with England in a single parliament, and at length carried the consent of Ireland. Thus was accomplished internal unity, whilst all minds and all arms were turned towards the external defence of the country. Never had this defence appeared more desperate; the persistence in war, under the circumstances which prevailed upon the Continent, was no longer policy, it was the heroism of the statesman, it was almost the madness of patriotism.

Bonaparte, falling a second time upon Italy, gained the victory of Marengo, that last happy stroke of his fortune. He had prepared it by his military genius; but the battle, unexpected on that day, had surprised him whilst his troops were scattered; he had, so to speak, fought in the dark during half the day; Desaix and Kellermann had conquered for him in the evening. Lombardy and Piedmont were the fruit of the victory. Moreau on his side gained at the same time the victories of Hochstedt and of Hohenlinden, in Germany. Austria, vanquished in two territories, signed an armistice, and implored for peace. Kleber, in Egypt, annihilated the Turkish army at Heliopolis. The Emperor of Russia, Paul I., a prince whose only policy was caprice and temper, leagued himself with

Sweden against the humiliating naval superiority of England. Paul was keeping up a secret correspondence with Bonaparte; the remainder of the alliance which still existed for England in the north of Europe was giving way on every side; America was hostile; Pitt felt himself abandoned at once by fortune, which is necessary to the greatest men, and by the opinion of his country, discouraged by struggling alone against destiny.

It was in this situation that he ventured to carry into effect one of his liberal principles in Ireland, by at length establishing political equality between the Catholics and the Protestants. The constant idea of Pitt had been to secularize politics, and to recognize in citizens only the difference in devotion to their country. Feeling that the majority in the Houses was failing him, and foreseeing the moment when it would be necessary to yield to the lassitude of his country, it is probable that he wished at least, before retiring, to leave to England this great inheritance of religious equality. The obstinacy of the king in refusing this measure to his minister authorized and honoured the resignation of Pitt. He fell gloriously upon the grounds of conscience and liberty, which he had himself chosen for his fall. His withdrawal threw England into consternation, and rejoiced only the party of Fox; but this party was too weak to be the successors of Pitt. The king nominated in his place Mr Addington, a man who possessed his confidence and the esteem of the country, but whose mediocrity as a politician and as an orator rendered evident the im-

mense space which had been left vacant, in debate, in the council, and in business, by the retirement of Pitt. The king was so violently affected by the withdrawal of the man who reigned for him, that during some weeks he lost his reason. The attack did not last long. On his recovery, the king conjured Mr Pitt to resume the direction of the State in so great an extremity, begging his minister not to insist upon the emancipation of the Catholics. Pitt was inflexible in his refusal; he thought, and he said, "that a minister who could prove false to himself, upon one of the principles most identified with his name, would be crushed by opinion and dishonoured before posterity." He promised the king only to support the Addington ministry, upon all other internal questions, by his counsels, his speech, and the votes of his friends, as though this ministry had been his own; as to the question of peace, he left the responsibility of it to Mr Addington, so far compassionating the discouragement of his country as not to reproach it with its weakness, but too convinced of the inconclusiveness, the danger, and the short duration of this peace to attach his name to it. His retreat, his silence, and his incredulity were his only protest. He seemed to say to England, I am more clairvoyant and more intrepid than is my country, but since my country is not at my level, it is for me to place myself at hers; there is no great statesman who is beyond the necessities, the exhaustion, and even the weaknesses of his country. It was one of the most meritorious moments in the life of Pitt; happy if he had maintained England in that stoical and

magnanimous attitude. His colleagues received, on their retirement, recompenses and honours, proportionate to the services they had rendered, and to the gratitude of the king. Pitt alone retired with ruined fortunes, in poverty and in glory.

THE peace of Amiens, signed in 1802 by the Addington ministry, was the illusion of a day to England. She did not long fail to see that if there was peace between the plenipotentiaries, there was war, more incompatible and more evident than ever, between England, isolated on her seas, and the absolute master of France, left without antagonist and without counterpoise. England, by the peace of Amiens, became in fact only the passive ally of her enemy, the First Consul; she deprived herself even of the right of protesting against his universal invasion, she was reduced to play the part of voluntary dupe and disarmed witness of his dictatorship in Europe; she sanctioned this ambition by her inaction and by her feigned friendship; she murmured without venturing to resist. This part, placing ourselves in the British point of view, which was that of Pitt and of the true English patriots, was the disgrace of a great people, and the confession of their impotency. Never could England have fallen so low through war as she fell through this peace, for in reverses there is still dignity, in prostrations there is none.

Mr Pitt, withdrawn into the country at his little house at Putney, not far from London, was still the in-

voluntary object of general attention. People inquired how he sympathized with the thoughts and the sufferings of the public. The friends of Fox, his eternal enemies, thought him still too great, though no longer present, to leave his memory in repose. They had the cowardice to attack him in parliament, through the medium of Lord Grey, and to reproach him, not only with his liberal policy towards the Catholics, but moreover with his withdrawal from the ministry. He again appeared at the House of Commons to defend himself; he openly confessed his opinions on the Union of Ireland and on the political emancipation of the Catholics, he refused to enter upon his other secret and personal motives for retiring (his repugnance towards the peace); he declared that he would support the Addington ministry formed by the king, under grave necessities, as though this ministry were his own; he magnanimously called upon his personal friends in parliament to give their confidence, their support, their votes, to the government; lastly, he defended, like Scipio, his own administration by the picture of the triumphs of England during those years of struggle; 78 vessels of the line, 180 frigates, 234 smaller vessels of war, destroyed or captured, 800 merchant-vessels intercepted or fallen as spoils into the hands of English cruisers; the navies of Holland and Spain decimated, and the rich colonies of these powers sequestered, at least temporarily, under the British flag; lastly, the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, counterpoised, during eight years of war, by the sole *veto* of the English people; Copen-

hagen and Aboukir become the tomb of two fleets; Malta reconquered, and Saint Jean d'Acre defended; Turkey succoured, and the general of the army of Egypt forced to evacuate his conquest as a fugitive, and to abandon his army to the scourges of plague, blockade, and capitulation! Amidst all this the regenerated finances sufficing for the pay of 200,000 English soldiers and of three courts in the north; the public credit fortifying itself by its sacrifices, and supplying England from a treasure as exhaustless as its patriotism.

Such are the replies that Pitt opposed to his abashed enemies. Fox, Sheridan, Whitbread, Burdett, Nicols, and others, his accusers, found the still almost unanimous opinion of the country ready to defend him. The House of Commons voted him thanks in lieu of disgrace, and his birthday was celebrated as a public festival by banquets and panegyrics in all the clubs.

These unworthy accusations were the summit of his fame; we now touch upon his faults. We know not whether it were his patience or his virtue which failed him; perhaps he was simply corrupted by the tedium of his inactivity—that frequent disease of those who have tasted action too young, who have always been in action, and whom inaction consumes.

His situation, although apparently inactive, was in reality an action upon opinion as powerful as it was worthy of him. He was the protector of the ministry,

the mute arbiter of the majority, the terror of the opposition, the last refuge of the king, the providence, hidden behind a temporary cloud, of the thrones and nationalities of Europe. One word from him could shake or strengthen the government of his country; England trusted in his words, and even in his silence; he was the more bound to be cautious in expression from the fact of this expression being decisive in relation to the public interests. There are men, such as Cicero at Rome, Mirabeau in France, and Pitt in London, to whom it is forbidden to be deceived; for, in the errors of their character or of their mind, they draw with them the world. Such was at this moment Mr Pitt. Infallibility was to him a necessity, silence a duty. In the embarrassing step his country had taken under the Addington ministry, since Mr Pitt had not thought proper to act himself, he should not have moved. Immobility was the sole attitude which became his past and his future career; the false peace which, against his innermost wish, he had allowed to be concluded was of its own accord failing fast enough without his being called upon to abridge it. The impatience of the friends of Mr Pitt, and principally of young Canning, the one amongst his disciples who was most closely to resemble the master, greatly contributed, it is said, to draw this great statesman from his immobility.

On the other hand, the gratitude they owed to Mr Pitt weighed heavily upon the ministers, especially in the case of Sheridan, whom his disorders and his debts had for some time past brought into the service

of the minister Addington and of the court; lastly, it must be admitted also, in excuse for Mr Pitt, that the precarious peace between France and England was breaking up of its own accord.

Under cover of the confused and inadequate stipulations of the treaty of Amiens, the First Consul was, in violation of the spirit of this treaty, constructing an empire without any limits but his caprice, around the Republic, itself transformed into a dictatorship over the Continent. He imposed his armed mediation upon Switzerland, until then the refuge of republican independence; he armed Piedmont, Valais, and the Italian Islands on the shores of the Mediterranean; he established a feudal king of Etruria in the heart of Tuscany; in America he purchased Louisiana of the Spanish; he reconquered Saint Domingo aud Guadeloupe. England, who had already restored to France all her colonies, in accordance with the treaty of Amiens, and even the Cape of Good Hope to the Dutch, at length hesitated, in presence of these encroachments, to restore to us Malta, that citadel of Africa, Sicily, and Greece, which dominated the three routes to the East.

In the meanwhile the Addington ministry, held to peace by Fox, dragged towards war by its own party in parliament, had not strength either to break off or to carry into effect the treaty of Amiens. The right man was earnestly called for; Pitt appeared still to hold back, and withdrew for a whole winter to his rural retreat, without once appearing either in parliament or in London; but he allowed his friends

to state that, under the present circumstances, he was inclined no longer to insist upon the emancipation of the Irish Catholics, and that thus there was no essential divergence of opinions between the king and Mr Pitt; there was nothing, therefore, according to these agitators of the ambition of the former minister, to prevent Mr Pitt from taking the government from the too feeble hands of Mr Addington. This minister, feeling himself menaced by these rumours, attempted to put a stop to them by causing a proposal to be made to Pitt for a reorganization of the ministry, in which he might be offered a secondary position.

The pride of Pitt was offended at the idea of occupying any but the first rank in the conduct of affairs; he took this offer in the light of an insult; he had the weakness to seek his revenge in open war against the ministry, which it was his duty either to protect or to spare. In this war his allies must inevitably be those same members of the opposition who had been for 10 years the most implacable enemies of himself and of his principles. He was at length about to renew that coalition of antipathies which he had himself so justly reprobated at the onset of his career, and without any excuse but that of ambition, the only virtue and only vice of his times. One cannot sufficiently deplore this moral fall of the statesman, the most *one*, the most consistent, and the most *continuous* who had ever until then presided over the destinies of his country. There is a flaw in all steel, there is one in every character. The ambition of

always governing his country and of always stirring Europe was that of Pitt; this ambition which had raised him so high in the estimation of the world, lowered him on that very day to the level of Fox; Jupiter the storm-compeller became an agitator of parliament. The man who had so justly contemned the intrigues and the apostasies of Fox, became himself a centre of intrigues and of parliamentary leagues, against his own nature and against his own opinions.

The rupture of the treaty of peace of Amiens, at length declared to parliament in the month of May, 1803, became the text of various accusations against Mr Addington. Some, like Fox, reproached him with having broken, others, like Pitt and his friends, with having too long continued, the illusion of a fatal peace. The French party of Fox, the anti-French party of the Grenvilles, blended together, without any common aim, as was seen in France in 1840, in a rash attack upon Addington. With a scandal bordering upon contempt, Pitt was heard, on the 24th of April, 1804, uttering a passionate harangue in support of Fox, who accused Addington of the pretended faults for which Pitt some days previously had praised this minister. This harangue was a real suicide consummated by Pitt at the feet of the opposition. The Addington ministry seemed crumbling beneath these combined assaults of the adverse orators. Pitt had the temerity to cause the king to be confidentially informed that he had not pledged himself to any one, and that he was free to govern as the king might think proper, if the power

were placed in his hands. The king gave him an audience; Pitt proposed a coalition ministry, in which Fox himself was to take part. The king, more of a statesman on this occasion than his former minister, understood that a government would be powerless in which Fox, the fanatic of revolutionary France, and Pitt, the chief of the counter-revolutionary war with France, would act and speak in opposition to each other, bound together by the sole tie of ambition always ready to be broken. He energetically refused to place the power in the hands of this coalition, and Pitt accepted it alone, excusing himself to Fox and to the friends of Fox upon the grounds of the king's antipathy to them. He formed a ministry, partly composed of members of the Addington ministry, partly of his own supporters, Canning, Dundas, Castlereagh, Huskisson.

England was surprised, like France in 1840, to see a ministry resume power whilst excluding the chief allies with whom it had been associated in obtaining it. The party of Fox became augmented by all the members of Pitt's former party, indignant at this deception. Pitt, who, 20 years previously, had owed his strength to his purity and to his generous struggle against a coalition, owed his weakness in 1804 to the obliteration of his character by this league unworthy of himself. He entered the ministry wounded. A statesman survives the blows struck by his enemies, he does not survive the blows which he gives himself. He was no longer Pitt, he was a deserter from power to the coalition, and from the coalition to power. His eloquence had become

lowered from its former accent, like his conscience. One cannot read without pity the account of the first sitting of his ministry, in the Parliamentary History of M. de Vielcastel.

"What the coalised parties had particularly charged on Addington," says this diplomatist, "was the weakness, the insufficiency of the system organized for the defence of the British territory, a system in which, it was said, too much importance was given to the organization of the volunteers in comparison with the regular forces. Pitt, who had scarcely entered on the exercise of his ministerial functions, hastened to propose to the House of Commons the formation of an army of reserve composed of men raised in each parish in proportion to the population, and intended to furnish annually twelve thousand recruits to the troops of the line. As might be expected, Addington and his friends opposed this new project. Fox and Windham, without disapproving the general plan, made numerous objections to it, and Grey succeeded, during a moment when most of the friends of the cabinet were absent from the House, in carrying an incidental question in accordance with the views of the opposition. At this, Pitt experienced an extreme irritation; the opposition, on the contrary, encouraged by this small success, conceived the hope of throwing out the bill, and the discussion assumed a character of violence which rendered plainly evident the exasperation of minds. Sheridan especially made himself conspicuous by his outburst and by his sarcasms. Reminding the House that Addington had considered himself called

upon to retire when he had found himself supported by only a feeble majority, he drew from this the conclusion that Pitt was bound to follow his example. Pitt replied that even the rejection of his proposition would not cause him to give in his resignation, so long as he preserved the hope of being useful to his country by remaining in power. As, in the course of the debate, there had been some malevolent allusions to the refusal of the king to admit Fox into the Council, he declared that he would enter into no explanation in regard to this application of an incontestable prerogative of the crown. He protested that, for his own part, he had strongly desired an administration established upon a larger basis, but he added that the spectacle of the very debate in which they were then engaged led him to doubt that it would have been possible to establish harmony in a cabinet composed of such heterogeneous elements. He complained with some emotion of the conduct of certain persons, who, after having but lately shown unlimited confidence in him, after having openly stated that his return to the ministry would suffice to calm their anxiety as to the condition of the country, had withdrawn from him for the sole reason that he did not number amongst his colleagues a man whose cause they could not so warmly defend without doing violence to their own real thoughts. These personalities led to passionate replies. The bill, supported by Canning and by Lord Castlereagh, nevertheless passed; but the motion of Grey for its rejection failed only by 30 votes, and the majority which definitively sanctioned it was only of

265 votes against 223. In the House of Lords, where Lord Grenville again opposed it, about two-thirds of the votes were given in its favour.

The health of Pitt was weakening at the same time as the moral consideration in which he was held; study, long watchings, eloquence, ambition which gives a fever to the soul as to the blood, lastly, the fatal habit of seeking strength, when exhausted after days of fatigue, in the half-intoxication of the evening, were consuming him before his time. The ambiguity of the situation in which he had prematurely seized the helm of state, without a reason for excluding some, and without a pretext for excluding others, produced indecision in his government.

In the mean while Bonaparte was from day to day supplying further justifications to Pitt for the personal war which this minister had vowed to wage against the invader of Europe. He had just, against the law of nations, struck the Duc d'Enghien rather as a murderer than as the head of a civilized nation; he had proclaimed himself emperor and founder of a military dynasty, without any consent on the part of Europe beyond its inability to protest; he caused the English ambassador in Saxony to be dismissed, like a sovereign carrying on the police of Europe; he treated as prisoners of war 20,000 English travellers, surprised, contrarily to all civilization, in the security of their journey through the Continent; he was preparing with ostentation an innumerable flotilla of flat-bottomed boats and an army at Boulogne and England, across the channel which protects her, watched with anxiety all his movements.

Pitt profited by these emotions in England to negociate at Saint Petersburg, at Stockholm, and at Vienna, a fourth coalition of the powers to whom the ambition of Bonaparte, grown into a dynasty, no longer left any choice between resistance or prostration before him. The extremity of the peril in which this universal monarchy of Napoleon involved England, decided all the true English patriots to lend their strength to the ministry of Pitt. Addington himself, on the persuasion of the king, pardoned Pitt for having overthrown him, and accepted a ministry in the cabinet of his former rival.

Fox, Grey, Windham, and the two Grenvilles, alone resisted the pressure of circumstances, and continued to harass Pitt, some by an affected confidence in the pacific disposition of Napoleon, at that moment encamped in sight of the English cliffs, others by implacable resentment against a former colleague who had forsaken them when he returned to power. These undignified quarrels of the two oppositions in parliament did not prevail against the national impulse of self-preservation which stirred England to its very foundations, and did not prevent Pitt from declaring war against Spain, and from disloyally sweeping its vessels from every sea before war was declared. Napoleon replied to these violences by fresh conquests, and by uniting the crown of Italy to the imperial crown upon his head. The treaty of April 1, 1805, signed at Saint Petersburg between Russia, Austria, and England, at length combined against him the fourth European league, to which Pitt had given his soul.

Prussia alone, always neutral when the safety of Germany was concerned, always arising too late for its own safety, had refused to join this patriotic combination of European independence: Napoleon did not long delay to avenge Pitt on the selfishness of Prussia.

Informed of the league by the invasion of Bavaria in Austria, Napoleon raised his camp at Boulogne, crossed the Rhine, surprised and made prisoner the Austrian army of Mack at Ulm, marched on Vienna, crushed the Austrians and Russians united at Austerlitz, dictated a peace to the vanquished, dismembered Germany for the second time to recompose it into feudatory states, and made Prussia anticipate with trembling the just retribution of Jéna for a neutrality as impolitic as treacherous. England, vanquished in all her allies at Austerlitz, contemplated with terror the ruin of her league upon the continent. Napoleon, thenceforth with no independence to oppose him but that of Prussia, which would fall in a single battle, was free to form the European blockade against England, and to declare her outlawed from the continental nations. Never did the political life of a statesman crumble so completely in one day upon his head. Pitt, crushed in all his combinations abroad by the cannon of Austerlitz, betrayed by Prussia, harassed by the opposition of Fox, who triumphed in parliament in his reverses, abandoned by his former friends the Grenvilles and the Windhams, who could not forgive him his coalition with Addington, justly lowered

in the estimation of his country, which during his last ministry had found in him neither the good fortune nor the integrity of his youth, succumbed at once to grief and sickness; and he expiated but too bitterly the fault he had committed in quitting his retreat before the hour when the unanimous voice of his country would have called him, free and unshackled, to save her in the extremity of peril. In coalescing with the oppositions, he had adulterated his politics in order to resume power; he had been obliged at once to break with his most faithful friends, and to equivocate, if not in words, at least in attitude, with the oppositions. This impolitic peace concluded by the Addington ministry, this equally inopportune war, which was leading so fatally to the ruin of England, fell now upon him with a double weight. The country, the king, the parliament, held him alone responsible for their disasters; he had not for his consolation even the testimony of rectitude and of an intact conscience; there was remorse in his grief, his own voice rose against himself with the voice of England; he felt that he was equally the man rendered necessary by events, and the man rendered impossible by his faults; a terrible lesson to those statesmen who know not how to fall without compromise, who league themselves with their natural enemies in order to regain power, who take the hand of these enemies in order to rise, who afterwards reject the hand which has been held out to them, and who thenceforth govern only by intrigue states which can be governed by the force of principles alone! Pitt, in these last days of his public life,

awakened the pity of Europe. In the position in which he had placed himself, an immense success was necessary to absolve him for his ambition; to him reverses were not only a misfortune, they were the vengeance of destiny, they were his death-blow; Austerlitz had killed him.

"PITT, reprobated by all parties," says history, "no longer found himself supported by any man gifted with really superior talents. An attempt he made for reconciliation with Lord Grenville was unsuccessful. And yet, never had auxiliaries capable of understanding him, of seconding his endeavours, and, up to a certain point, of replacing him, been more indispensable. His health, during the last four years, had become greatly weakened under his fatigues and disappointments. Almost continually suffering from an affection of the stomach which deprived him of all appetite, he had accustomed himself to seek in the immoderate use of wine a stimulus of his physical strength, perhaps a momentary release from mental suffering. This deplorable habit had ended by assuming the character of an imperious want, and, in allowing it to gain upon him more and more, Pitt was completing the ruin of his already shaken constitution. His inflamed countenance, the profound alteration in his features formerly noble and calm, revealed sadly to all eyes the melancholy change in his habits. His powerful intellectual faculties as yet struggled energetically against this wasting decay."

England, struck down by the same blow, remained as though stunned by the fall of all its allies upon the continent and the stupor of her only statesman. She had as yet no suspicion of the rapid decline of Pitt. During the intervals between the sessions of parliament, Pitt was in the habit of disappearing from the scene, and burying himself in his little house at Putney, a solitude where, in the bosom of nature and of friendship, he could restore his courage. No sound penetrated, or issued from, this retreat; the circle of the affections of Pitt did not extend beyond his family circle. He had never married, but in the latter period of his life he had invited one of his nieces, the daughter of his sister, to keep his house, and to relieve him of the duties of his modest establishment. This niece, with whom we long afterwards conversed on the subject of these domestic details of the inner life of a great man, became subsequently the celebrated Lady Hester Stanhope, so well known by her flight from the world and her romantic residence amongst the solitudes of Mount Lebanon. Gifted with a masculine political genius derived from her intimacy with Mr Pitt, this granddaughter of Lord Chatham evidenced in her majestic beauty, her energetic character, and her impassioned eloquence the lofty nature of her race. The family Egeria, placed near this great statesman as though to connect him to earth by something human, without distracting him from the wholly political preoccupations in which his existence was absorbed, lived, like him, in the isolation of great thoughts; these thoughts, con-

stantly tending towards the superhuman, became at a later period exalted to a prophetic mysticism, and gave to her in Arabia the attitude of a queen of Palmyra and of an Eastern sibyl; but she was then only the echo of the political thoughts of Mr Pitt; she reigned, amidst this obscure dwelling at Putney, over England and over Europe; after having thus reigned, she disdained all that was not empire, and she preferred the desert to the world.

The tender cares of Lady Hester Stanhope softened the last days of Mr Pitt in that simultaneous ruin of his power, his fortune, and his life; she closed his eyes on the 23rd January, 1806, one month and a few days only after the battle of Austerlitz.

He died, so she told me, prophesying that the omnipotence of Napoleon was near at hand, but adding that if England had the fortitude to resist alone, like the Peloponnesus of old, against this modern Xerxes, she would sooner or later find in this heroism the reward of its sacrifices, by preserving, for the day of the reaction of the world against the military principle, the independence of peoples and the liberty of institutions. She told me that he died as he had lived, full of these political thoughts. He had never directed his meditations toward things divine higher than his country; his principle was the equality of religious persuasions, and an impartial civil tolerance of all the Christian sects who, under various dogmas, adore the same God; penetrated by a pious deism, which is a token in all centuries of great minds, he exhibited neither piety nor impiety towards the Established Church.

The philosophy of the 18th century was the basis of his principles, the spread of civilization his religion, the amelioration of the human race his duty, the liberty and the dignity of institutions his morality. The Bishop of Lincoln, his friend, exhorted him to yield up his soul with confidence into the hands of his Creator. He listened with a manly and resigned compunction to the exhortations of religion and friendship, and breathed his last on the 23rd January, 1806, at six in the evening, the anniversary of the day upon which, 24 years previously, he had pronounced in parliament his first speech, which made him the prime minister of his country. He had scarcely attained the age of 46. This short space of time comprised the longest political career which had as yet fallen to the lot of any minister of England. At his age the great Lord Chatham, his father, had not yet entered the councils of the government of his country.

The ministry, of which he was the soul, broke up of itself on the day following his death. England, in spite of its temporary injustice, felt as though deprived of its directing thought, upon unexpectedly hearing of the death of Pitt. There are men in whom a whole country feels itself to live and die.

The House of Commons, with a respect for genius and patriotism in which all dissensions were lost sight of, voted him a public funeral at the public expense, two millions for the payment of his debts, contracted by negligence of his private interests, and pensions to

his next of kin, and principally to Lady Hester Stanhope. It was upon this pension, due to the memory of Pitt, that we saw her living in Syria, in an exile of mingled luxury and indigence which in present mediocrity reminded one of ancient grandeur.

By a persistence in envy unworthy of a large heart and of a magnanimous rivalry, Fox was the only one to refuse in parliament, to the memory of Pitt, these subsidies to disinterestedness, these honours for services rendered, this national tomb to a great and fallen enemy! Fox succeeded him in power, and soon followed him to the tomb. His ministry of six months, full of contradictions, inconsistencies, and apostasies, was neither war nor peace, but the perpetual wavering of a man who has beforehand sapped his foundations in an opposition without sincerity, and who can find security neither in the principles he has repudiated nor in those which he adopts. Melancholy example of the incapacity of party-men ever to become men of power!

The long war between England and France which survived Pitt, the reciprocal calumnies which the two nations interchanged during 20 years through the medium of their journals, their pamphlets, and even their histories, have deferred until the present time, on the Continent, an impartial judgment upon Pitt. A writer and an eminent statesman of France, the author of *The History of the Consulate and the Empire*, still calls him a man of mediocrity. It is not permitted

that patriotism should be so deplorably mistaken as to the characteristics of genius, and still less that it should thus deceive posterity. Let us judge our enemies not upon their nationality, but upon their works; the favourite son of the great Lord Chatham, the disciple of his genius, the precocious inheritor of his experience, the emulator of his prodigious eloquence, the young man who, at 23 years of age, dazzled the English tribune with his light, and whose youth appeared ripe enough for his country to intrust him with the helm in the tempest; the minister who, during 22 years, kept in his hands this rudder of a free state, while steering England through the *mêlée* of Europe and of the French Revolution to the zenith of its importance and of its fortune, and, by the league of Europe which was combined, supported, directed by his soul even after death, to the overthrow of Napoleon; the man who understood sufficiently that which is the true strength of peoples, their moral strength, to preserve intact the free institutions of his country, while seeking to obtain over this country, in such extreme circumstances, no other dictatorship but that of eloquence, of reason, and of persuasion; the man who, whilst defending the aristocracy and the monarchy as two bases of the constitutional tripod of Great Britain, constantly studied to advance the rights of the democracy, its third power; the man who advocated even amidst the storms of politics the sincere and universal representation of the people, parliamentary liberty, liberty of conscience, the emancipation of religious persuasions, the philosophical and Christian equality of the different races of

men; the man, in short, who, whilst combating victorious France, as policy and his country commanded him to do, always respected the legislative France of 1789, and preserved in England itself the true principles of this Revolution, found intact in that exile of 1814, and brought back in a charter by the Restoration; the man who governed after his death as much as he had governed during his life, so essentially was he the true statesman of the century; lastly, the man whose beloved and faithful pupil, Mr Canning, could raise in the face of Europe, in 1822, the banner of "*the political and religious liberty of nations throughout the universe,*" without departing from the doctrines of his master; such a man, if he be a man of mediocrity, confounds all the notions of greatness and littleness in statesmen, hitherto received in the human mind.

Richelieu did not do greater things, and what he did was with ferocity, at the edge of the axe; Mazarin did not overcome greater difficulties, and what he did was with less eloquence; Napoleon himself, his great enemy, performed more gigantic things with his sword, but not with the sole power of thought, of will, and of expression, of a statesman persuading the free opinion of his country; neither did he perform them so permanently, for they fell beneath him, with him, before him, and the things which Pitt accomplished alone, without breaking a single law of his country, survived him.

As for ourselves, we have in this history neither overrated his talents nor concealed his faults, but, striking a fair balance between his services and his

weaknesses, we freely assert him to be, in our opinion, as in that of his country, his real judge, the greatest of the statesmen of the 18th century, the Machiavelli without crime, the Richelieu without an executioner, the Mazarin without cunning, the Mirabeau without venality, of England. His triumph over Napoleon is not the triumph of England over France, but the triumph of liberty of spirit over armed force. England owed to him her heroic attitude during the prostration of the Continent before Napoleon; the Continent owed to him its awakening, its insurrection against the invader, its independence; France herself, after her long eclipse of liberty and after the reprisals of the world, owed to him the principles embodied in her charter, her representative constitution, her tribune, her liberal Restoration of 25 years. For the French Revolution, like a child driven from the paternal roof, had been sheltered by a stranger, thanks to the inviolability of the British soil under Pitt, and this great enemy restored it after the peace, as a hostage which he had always respected, even in combating against the terror and the empire, the only real enemies of the Revolution. We can conceive that the partisans of popular tyranny or of imperial despotism should detest and calumniate the great name of Pitt; but in men who call themselves liberals there is ignorance or ingratitude in the attempt to disgrace the only statesman of a free country, who faced the sword of the conqueror of Europe and the contemner of the Revolution.

SHAKSPEARE.

INTRODUCTION.

So liable are men to change and to the effects of distaste and of infatuation, that even cold posterity itself does not preserve their genius, and *fashion*, that inconstant caprice of taste, reigns amongst those immortal dead whom we call great men, raising them in turn above each other, sometimes giving them the highest sometimes the lowest place, until, by some new caprice, it allows them to fall, only to raise them again, into that bed of forgetfulness whither they return to sleep their sleep of centuries.

We ourselves have witnessed, within the few years allotted to us, this phenomenon of the instability of reputations, and of infatuation in regard to them, renewed several times without apparent cause, especially during the period of 1820 and that of 1830, when a literary sect termed that of *romantism* was struggling against a literary routine termed *classicism*. It is

thus that a great Italian poet, Dante, as the author of a barbarous conception written in almost superhuman language, was recently placed above Virgil and Homer, those mortal gods of the beautiful in epic conception and expression. It is thus that Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Corneille, Racine, Goethe, Schiller, those admirable models of poetic drama on every antique and modern scene, were suddenly made to descend from their pedestals to make place for one single statue, that of a man certes very great, but great as chaos is great, and less great than is the regulated and ordered greatness of the created world.

Let us pass over these vicissitudes of literature, in this case rendered excusable by the immensity of the abrupt genius of this national poet of the English; let us compare him to himself alone; let us, if they please, term him the great *Pan* of their popular literature, but let us deplore that he wrote at a period when taste, that civilization of the mind, did not exist, and when barbarism and genius contrasted as shadow and splendour in plays submitted to the judgment of the populace. William Shakspeare, we gladly admit, would have been more than a man had he written, half a century later, for the *élite* of a more highly-polished people.

However this may be, when his long-neglected master-pieces were rescued from forgetfulness by the talent of the marvellous actor Garrick, and when, at the close of the last century, the news of this revival reached the ears of Voltaire, this universal oracle of European taste arose, and in a letter to the French

Academy, which was read by d'Alembert, protested in favour of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Corneille, Racine, and—though his own name was not mentioned —himself, against this exclusive infatuation of the English. He desired that Europe should learn to know what was put forward for its homage; he gave a literal translation of some passages in the gross and obscene dramas of the English poet. The French Academy, the daughter of antiquity, was staggered. Such language, such disgraceful stains, hid from her eyes the sparkling genius of Shakspeare.

The fanatical adherents of this great man denied the faithfulness of the translation, and the possibility of such a scandal; they were mistaken: the translation was faithful, the scandal was a fact, and if a chaste pen could in this day venture to translate the ignoble obscenities with which Juliet's nurse contaminated the virgin ear of Romeo's lady-love, it would be found that Voltaire is very far from having denounced all to France. In every country and in every century, modesty has formed part of the beautiful in the drama and in language. The polished populace of Athens or of Paris must needs have been a thousand times more respected by its great scenic poets than was that of London. The fact is, that the audience at Athens and at Paris was a people, whilst at London it was a populace.

Certain it is, when one considers the defects in point of taste, the improprieties, the grossness, the obscenities, and even the questionable style by which the plays of the English Æschylus and Molière are

disgraced, that Voltaire is not too severe; indeed, to speak the whole truth—and I would wish for no better proof than the most pathetic of his dramas, Romeo,—the indignation of the man of taste in Voltaire is scarcely commensurate to the filthiness of the scandal. Were I called upon to give proof and instances, I should say, read for yourselves, read when alone, and not in presence of your wives and daughters, for a pen possessed of any self-respect could not reproduce such horrors without bringing a blush to the cheek even of denizens of a guard-room.

But when we consider the power of conception, the eloquence, the fecundity, the truth, the sublimity of this incomparable man, Voltaire is wrong; for he allows the sun of art to be hidden from him by a spot upon the glass of his telescope. What might have been said with truth, from the standing-point of Voltaire, is that in this eminent man (Shakspeare) everything was immense, bad taste as well as genius! This is the simple truth.

Now are we to conclude that this bad taste was inherent in Shakspeare? Did it not belong to his audience? We incline to think that it was more in the audience than in the poet. The pit is the absolute sovereign of the dramatic author. And, as we may coax a tiger by throwing to him carrion, so may a populace be flattered by throwing bad taste and immodesty to its senseless and immoral laughter. Bad plays are but the counter-proof of bad times.

Not that the literary century of Elizabeth, the 16th century, in which Shakspeare wrote, was by

any means a barbarous one; it was rather a century too much quintessenced, an age of affectation and corruption in style; for it is to be observed that, in Italy and France, as in England, the literature of nations does not begin with barbarism, but with affectation. People, in these epochs of the birth or revival of literature, mistake *artificiality* for nature; before becoming simple they are unnaturally contorted. It is this pretentious style, united to barbarism, which constitutes the principal characteristic of writers belonging to these periods. Simplicity in greatness, which is the true characteristic of the beautiful or the sublime, is only realized afterwards. This affectation of language, combined with meanness in the expressions and figures of speech, is also the characteristic of the dramas of Shakspeare. Nothing less than the vast superiority of his genius and eloquence could have sufficed for the recognized and permanent triumph of his literary beauties and defects.

Before studying the work, one wishes to know the man. The man, in Shakspeare, has many points of resemblance with Molière, the greatest man of the French stage, and perhaps of all European stages. He was less a man of art than the man of a calling. The stage created him; he was the child of the pit; the public fashioned him as it pleased, and in its own image. But Molière, infinitely more perfect in his style, wrote comedy only; Shakspeare was at once comic and tragic, pathetic like Euripides, a philosopher like Sophocles, sublime like Corneille, tender like Racine.

Every instrument by the aid of which men may be moved fitted to his hand; the Scapin of Molière and the Falstaff of Shakspeare are of the same family. Reverie or tears are called forth, and flow from the same vein, at the behest of this master of the human heart. It is this which makes him unique, an *incomparable comedian*, universality.

He was born, in 1564, at the little town of Stratford-upon-Avon, of an obscure family belonging to the trading classes. His father was a dealer in wool; sheep were sheared upon the premises. Some biographers assert that the latter served for the sale of meat slaughtered by the father of the poet, who followed also the cruel calling of a butcher. They add, as a popular tradition of the place, that the child, clothed in a blood-stained garment, and assuming tragical attitudes in the paternal slaughter-house, was wont to address solemn harangues to his victims prior to immolating them, and that thus he acquired a taste for tragedy. But this has neither authenticity nor foundation. Throughout his life William exhibited the gentlest disposition and the tenderest pity towards animals as well as towards men. There is not the slightest indication of ferocity in his character, and this pity forms the most eloquent and touching source of his genius. Besides, the paternal house of Shakspeare, which still existed some few years back at Stratford-upon-Avon, preserved no trace of the construction adapted for the trade of a butcher. It was a simple middle-class habitation, adapted to a

family of very moderate means, in the angle of the yard attached to which was to be seen a fruit-tree (the antique mulberry-tree of Shakspeare), then a still living monument of the childhood of the poet, which has only recently ceased to live, and of which the trunk and branches, with fragments cut from every portion of them, as though they had been the wood of the real poetical cross, could not suffice to the superstition of England. The child evidently received a good home education and solid classical instruction in the Stratford schools. His historical works attest his reading upon antique subjects, and are full of quotations. His family married him, at the age of 18, to a young woman somewhat older than himself, by whom he had three children; but whether from the recklessness of youth, or from the fact that he had as yet missed his vocation, his duties as a husband and a father did not suffice to retain him at the conjugal hearth. It is said that he left his native place on account of an offence against the game laws, which he, with some of his boon companions, had committed in the forests of the county; and that, in order to avoid a prison, he fled to London, where he sought employment in some subordinate position at the then most frequented theatre of the capital. It is even stated that he was reduced, for the sake of a few small pieces of money, to hold the horses of spectators during the performance. It was not long, however, before he figured upon the stage in a double capacity, as an actor, and especially as an author. His talent as an actor does not appear to have been of the first order,

even when he acted in his own plays. The ideality which conceives internally the drama and its characters, differs essentially from the gesture and physiognomy by which they are rendered externally to the eye of the spectators. The one is the soul, the other is the body.

Mozart and Rossini, who wrote the most divine music, could not sing it. It was thus with Corneille and Racine; thus with Molière, an actor of very moderate pretensions; thus with Shakspeare.

His success as an author of plays, alternately tragic and comic, for the London theatres, the favour of Queen Elizabeth, of the court, and of the public, did not cause him either to neglect or to forget his family, and the roof of his father at Stratford-upon-Avon. Thither he repaired every year with the modest but carefully accumulated gains arising from his success in London. There he prepared for his wife, his children, and himself, an honourable competence for the time when age invites to repose; thither he early retired, as a man who held domestic happiness in far greater estimation than the vain applause of the world; there he spent his last years, rich enough to satisfy his own desires, surrounded with that glory which becomes happiness only when it is transformed into the consideration and affection of those who surround us. There he died, at the age of 57, leaving as an inheritance a hearth and a competence to his family, a universe to his memory. He had been in the habit of writing two great dramas every year.

To analyze his works would be to analyze the

human heart: he is its greatest painter. Virtue, crime, passion, vices, ridicule, greatness, littleness, all belong to him; the whole key-board of human nature is beneath his fingers. We purpose, in order that he may be known to you, to quote only the five or six great passions upon which he moulds his most celebrated dramas; and to begin with the first and the noblest of all, love,—*Romeo and Juliet*.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

It was this play which spread most quickly and most widely the name of its author. Love is a flame which needs no fuel save itself to burn, and to attract by its brightness the attention of men, either to the event where it occurs, or to the scene where it is represented. Sometimes, as in *Hamlet* and *Othello*, love is mingled with ambition, with jealousy, with crime; but in *Romeo and Juliet* it mingles with nothing save its own purity and its own ardour. It alone constitutes its own interest, its own drama, and its poet. To be supremely dramatic, one requires but to love. Such is Shakspeare in *Romeo and Juliet*, that love drama, the ideal of lovers.

Let us study it from its origin to its eternal representation upon all the theatres of the universe.

It should be stated that about the year 1600 a

great transfusion of literary blood took place between Italy and England. Almost all the poesies and romances, which were then termed novels, came from Italy, the most literate country of the times, and were spread amongst the literate in Great Britain, and even amongst the people under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, with all the charm and all the affectation of the *renaissance* of southern literature. Rome, Naples, Venice, Verona, Florence, and Pisa at that period gave the tone to the whole of Europe. This may be seen in Spencer, a poet of the first order, at once sublime and corrupted by the influence of this Italian literature; it is seen in Milton, who at a later period made a voyage to Naples, and whom the strength of his solitary genius preserved from the affectation of the Italians; it is seen in Shakspeare himself, who began by writing mythological poems and sonnets in imitation of Italy, and who became eloquent and virile only when the pathetic power of his subjects raised him, as though in spite of himself, to the height of his philosophical genius.

These romances or novels, translated and spread throughout England, soon became popular there, and formed a collection of legends which ministered to the credulity of the British people, then more chivalrous than it has since been. The gloomy history of the two lovers at Verona, Romeo and Juliet, appeared at this time, and this strange and double proof of a love confirmed by two suicides, soon became as celebrated as any tragical occurrence of antiquity, or in the history of England itself. This is the period of

maturity when poesy gathered the legend, the story, or the historical romance from popular imagination, in order to consecrate them in the memory of nations, either in the form of a poem or as a drama. Afterwards the romancer comes the poet, and the stage, become a pedestal, bears to the uttermost posterity, in the imperishable language of verse or poetic prose, the magnified and solemnized event which is to engage the interest of centuries.

Such was the condition in which Shakspeare found the marvellous story of Romeo and Juliet in the imagination of the English people, when he sought to make it his own, in order to produce it upon the stage. The Italian story was so beautiful, so strange, so pathetic, that he could not have ventured upon inventing it. There is no combination in the imagination of a man of genius which at all approaches to what nature invents. The poetry of poets is passion. Shakspeare felt this, he invented nothing; he contented himself with giving speech to the lovers, and with adding eloquence to the simple, touching, or desperate situations in which the unadorned narrative of the Italian novelist placed his personages.

In order that the reader may here thoroughly understand what was done to this effect by Shakspeare, we will first place before him, in the Italian novel, the simple and complete narrative whence the English poet derived almost literally the incidents of the tragical adventure of the two lovers of Verona. We will then throw aside the Italian novel upon which

was founded the play, and show the immortal poet after the popular romancer.

Here, then, is the original and primitive story of Romeo and Juliet, written by *Luigi da Porta*, as an agreeable pastime during his recovery from a wound he had received in fighting for Venice against the Austrians, and dedicated by him to his illustrious kinswoman, *Lucina Savorgnana*.

"At the period when Bartolomeo della Scala, a nobleman full of kindness and humanity, governed according to his pleasure the city of Verona, there were two very noble families of courageous and opulent men, favoured both of heaven and earth. From some cause, as often happens between illustrious houses, there was an implacable hatred between them, which on several occasions had cost the life of valiant men on both sides. But, whether they had ended by becoming mutually tired of their losses, as frequently occurs in such cases, or whether they were intimidated by the threats of Signor della Scala, who on his part witnessed the effects of their enmity with great displeasure, they ceased to have recourse to violence and provocations, so that, without having verbally concluded any peace, these two families appeared to have forgotten their ancient feud. Things had even reached such a point that it was not rare to see members of these two families conversing together upon suitable occasions.

"Peace being thus restored, it happened that at the period of the carnival there were great rejoicings at Verona, and that at the house of the sire Antoine

Cappelletti, a most honourable man, fond of pleasure, and chief of the family whose name he bore, festivities were held which lasted both day and night, to which crowds repaired from every quarter of the town.

"It happened that one night, as is customary amongst lovers who, as far as possible, follow their ladies not only in thought but in person wherever they may go, a young man of the family of the Montecchi repaired to the festivities of Signor Cappelletti, in order to meet a belle in whom he was interested. This young man was in the flower of youth, he was tall and well made, with an agreeable face, and the most distinguished manners. When he removed his mask, as every one did during the ball, all eyes were fixed upon him, as much from admiration of his beauty, which was perfect, and which surpassed even that of the most beautiful women present, as from surprise to see a Montecchi thus venture to present himself at the house of the head of the Cappelletti, and especially at a ball given at night. But he was observed with more particular interest by the only daughter of the said Antoine Cappelletti. She was of extraordinary beauty, of an open and mirthful disposition; her appearance and manners were most graceful. As soon as she perceived this young man, she was so struck with his appearance that, at the first time that their eyes met, she felt that she no longer belonged to herself.

"The young man held himself apart, seated in a

corner, but rarely joining in the dance or in conversation. This was very displeasing to the young lady, who had heard that he was possessed of wit and of much charm in conversation.

"When midnight had struck, and the festivities were about to conclude, the dance of the *torchio* (torch), or of the *cappello* (hat), for both names were given to it, was commenced. It is still practised in our time, and is performed by holding hands to form a circle; a cavalier chooses his lady, then the lady her cavalier, and so on. A lady went forth to seek the young Romeo Montecchi for this dance, and by chance placed him beside the young girl in whom he had inspired love. The latter had, at her other hand, a young man named Marcuccio the squint-eyed, whose hands were naturally as cold in the month of July as in the month of January. The young Montecchi having thus been placed beside this young lady, took her hand, as was required in the dance. She, wishing doubtless to hear him speak, immediately said: 'You are welcome, Signor Romeo.'

"At these words the young man, who had divined from the glances of the young lady the interest she took in him, was nevertheless greatly surprised to hear her speak thus. 'What,' he replied to her, 'am I so happy as to hear from your lips words so flattering to me?' 'Yes,' resumed she, 'you are welcome; for at least you, Signor, warm my left hand by your touch, whereas Marcuccio, on the contrary, has frozen my right hand.' Romeo, encouraged by this language, continued: 'If I am thus happy to be able to warm

your hand with mine, you with your eyes have inflamed my very heart!' The young girl smiled; but wishing to avoid the appearance of conversing for any length of time with him, she only added: 'Upon my faith I swear to you, Romeo, that there is not here a lovely lady who is as beautiful as you are handsome in my eyes.' 'However unworthy I may be of this honour,' replied Romeo, 'it will be always my happiness to be the faithful servitor of your beauty, if you do not disdain my homage.'

"Shortly afterwards, the festivities being concluded, Romeo returned home, reflecting upon the cruelty of the lady to whom up to that time he had addressed his vows, and who had only met his attentions with coldness.

"He resolved to devote himself wholly to Juliet, since, although she belonged to the family of his enemies, she had thrown so much affection towards him. On her part, the young girl, since this interview, was almost wholly engrossed in Romeo, and, after many sighs, she believed that her happiness would be assured for life if she could only be united in marriage with Romeo; but she had little hope of succeeding in this, by reason of the feud which existed between her family and that of the Montecchi.

"Continually agitated by this incertitude, how many times did she say to herself: 'Imprudent that I am, by what flattering ideas have I allowed myself to be led away! In what a labyrinth have I allowed myself to become lost! Soon, perhaps, abandoned and without a guide, I shall find no issue towards

which to retrace my steps; for Romeo Montecchi is perhaps far from having sincere sentiments towards myself. He is the enemy of my family, and perhaps seeks only to carry out some vengeance at the expense of my good name; and, even were he really inclined to marry me, never would my father consent to give me to him.'

"Then, reflecting anew, she would say to herself: 'Who knows whether I might not succeed in having Romeo as my husband, according to my desire, and whether this might not be the surest means of re-establishing peace between our two houses, which are already wearied and tired of the enmity they have so long borne against each other.' Under the influence of this thought, she began to exhibit towards Romeo more friendship than she had hitherto done. The two lovers, burning one for another with a similar flame, from this moment began to express their mutual sentiments by tender glances, wherever they could possibly meet, nor was there any happiness for either of them when they had not succeeded in doing so.

"As to Romeo, so enamoured was he with the merits of this lady, that he was wont to spend a portion of his nights, alone, and at the peril of his life, beneath the windows of his beloved; sometimes, even, he would climb up to that of her room, and there, unseen by her or any other being, he could see her and listen to the soft tones of her voice. One night the moon was shining brightly, and, whether by chance, or that she had heard him on previous occasions, Juliet opened her window at the

moment when Romeo was preparing to climb to her balcony. He, not knowing who it might be, sought to conceal himself in the shadow of a wall which was near the spot; but Juliet, having perceived and recognized him, called him by name, and said to him: 'What do you here at this hour?' Romeo, reässured upon hearing the voice of Juliet, replied: 'Alas! whatever love chooses to inspire me to do.' 'And, if you were surprised, would you not run the risk of being slain, and without any means of defence?' 'Certainly I might easily be slain here, and I shall perish here some night, if you do not take pity upon me. But anywhere else I am exposed to death the same as here, and I should prefer to die as near as possible to you, with whom I would ever live, were this agreeable to Heaven and you.' Juliet then answered: 'It will never be against my wish that you should be able to live with honour near to me. Please Heaven that neither you, nor the enmity which exists betwixt your house and mine, may oppose a greater obstacle to this than I do!' 'You may well be assured,' replied Romeo, 'that I desire nothing in the world so much as to possess you, and that, so soon as you may consent to be mine, as I desire to be yours, I will do all that is possible to succeed in accomplishing our union. Then, when you have become my wife, I do not fear that any one will dare to tear you from my arms.' After this explanation, they conversed upon the means of seeing each other with greater security on some other night. Bidding each other adieu, they then separated.

"Romeo often returned subsequently to visit Juliet, and one evening, when a prodigious quantity of snow was falling, he said to her: 'Alas! will you not take some pity upon me, who every night wait for you here, whatever may be the weather? It is now bitterly cold. Why keep me thus in suspense?' 'Oh! it is certainly not without pity that I see you thus exposed,' said she; 'but what can I do to prevent it, beyond begging you not to persist further?' 'What I should desire,' replied the young man, 'is, that you would let me enter your room, where we might converse more at our ease.' Upon this the young lady, almost irritated, answered: 'I love you, Romeo, as much as it is possible to love, perhaps more than is right in a young girl who has been properly brought up. In so doing, I yield to the confidence with which your merit has inspired me; but if you have ever thought that by suit of importunity and flattery you might obtain from me anything that honour would reprobate, you are greatly mistaken; and I conjure you to dismiss this thought. But, not to keep you any longer exposed to the dangers which I believe threaten even your life by reason of your coming every night to this street, I will tell you frankly that when you choose to accept me as your wife, I am ready to give myself up to you entirely, and to repair with you to any spot that may suit you, without any reserve.' 'It is this that is the object of my most ardent wishes,' replied Romeo; 'I desire nothing except to become your husband. Let us therefore at once arrange means for our marriage.' 'With all my

heart,' replied Juliet, 'and I desire that it should duly take place in presence of Father Lorenzo, of the convent of St Francis, who is my confessor, if you wish that I should give myself to you with complete satisfaction.' 'Ah!' replied Romeo, 'it is then Father Lorenzo of Reggio who knows all the secrets of your heart?' 'Yes,' said she, 'and I shall be greatly pleased if our marriage can be celebrated before him.' Then the two lovers conversed upon the means of realizing their projects, and afterwards separated.

"Father Lorenzo was of the minor order of the Observance, a great philosopher, well skilled in many sciences, both natural and magic. He was bound to Romeo by so close a friendship that it would have been almost impossible at that period to find another such example. In fact, this priest, wishing both to preserve public esteem and to enjoy the pleasures of the world, had been obliged to obtain the support of a few influential persons in Verona, amongst whom he had selected Romeo, a young man possessed of great influence in the city, gifted with resolution and with much prudence.

"Romeo, therefore, sought out Father Lorenzo, frankly revealed to him his love for Juliet, and how much he desired to make her his wife, and then added that it had been arranged between them that he alone should be the secret witness of their marriage, and that he should subsequently use his influence to obtain the assent to it of the father of Juliet.

"The good priest was greatly flattered by the con-

fidence thus placed in him, and promised to do all in his power to serve the lovers, firstly, because he could refuse nothing to Romeo, and also because he hoped that this union might perhaps lead to a reconciliation between the two families, a circumstance that would bring him into great favour with Bartolomeo della Scala and the heads of the city, who desired to see peace re-established between the houses of Cappelletti and Montecchi. As it was then the holy period of Lent, Juliet feigned to wish to attend the confessional. Having thus repaired to the monastery of St Francis, she entered one of those closets which, according to the custom of the time, served as confessionals in convents, and asked for Father Lorenzo. The latter, having heard her, came with Romeo into the same confessional, closed the door, and, having removed a little iron grating which was between them and Juliet, he said to her: 'It is with great pleasure that I see you here on ordinary occasions, my beloved daughter; but to-day my pleasure will be greater if it be true that you are willing to accept my good friend Signor Romeo for your husband.' To which Juliet replied: 'I desire nothing more ardently in the world than to be his lawful wife, and it is for this reason that I have come to you, my father, who possess all my confidence, in order that, through your ministry in presence of God, you may bless a union which love imposes upon us.'

"Then, through the ministry of the reverend father, who declared that he received everything under the seal of secrecy, Juliet and Romeo were united in the

sacred bonds of matrimony; after which they mutually promised to see each other again on the following night, and then separated. The priest, when they had left, replaced the grating, and received the confession of several ladies, who were waiting for the purpose.

"The two lovers having been secretly married, as I have described to you, met each other on several nights to arrange means by which they might obtain the consent of the father of Juliet, whom they knew to be adverse to their love.

"Whilst these things were taking place, it happened that evil fortune, inimical to all human happiness, exercising I know not what ill-fated influence, awakened betwixt the two families that hatred which had appeared to be almost extinguished. Thus, one day when some Cappelletti and Montecchi met each other in a public place, each party refused to make way for the other, and a mutual attack was the consequence. Romeo, out of regard for his wife, had abstained from taking part in the quarrel; but, seeing that almost all his friends had been wounded and put to flight, and carried away by his anger, he at length rushed to encounter Tebaldo, the head of the Cappelletti, who was one of the fiercest combatants, and with one blow stretched him dead upon the spot. The others, discouraged by the loss of their chief, were soon completely routed.

"The death of Tebaldo had been too public to allow of any doubt as to the author of the homicide. The matter was therefore laid before Signor della Scala,

and every Cappelletti loudly demanded a sentence of perpetual banishment against Romeo.

"Oh what cruel grief must not this unfortunate young woman have experienced in her heart when she found herself afflicted with such misfortune! Every reader whose heart is susceptible of being touched may easily form an idea of it. She was continually weeping, nobody was able to calm her grief, which was rendered more insupportable by the fact that she did not dare to reveal the cause of it to any one.

"On his part, the young husband, obliged to fly from his native place, was inconsolable at having to abandon his Juliet. He determined that he would not leave her without expressing to her his griefs and bidding her adieu, whatever might be the risk incurred in so doing. However, as he could not repair to his wife's abode, he had recourse to the good priest, whom Juliet caused to be informed, by one of her father's servitors who was devoted to Romeo, that she would visit the convent of St Francis, which she accordingly did. The young married couple, having entered the closet which served as a confessional, wept bitterly over their misfortune, but at length Juliet said to her husband: 'Alas! what is to become of me without you? Now I can no longer live without seeing you; it would be better that I should leave with you, no matter where you may go to live. I will cut off this long hair, and then I will follow you as a servitor; and you could never be better or more faithfully served than by me.' 'God forbid, dearest,' then replied Romeo, 'that, when it

may be your wish to come with me, I should treat you otherwise than as my lady. But fear not, I am assured that things cannot remain in their present condition, that peace will soon be concluded between our families, and that consequently I may hope shortly to obtain the forgiveness of the sovereign.

"'It would be best, I think, that we should remain apart from each other for a few days only, during which time my heart will be the more linked to your own from the fact of our being temporarily separated.

"'But should it happen that things should not take place according to my anticipations, then we will adopt another course, and consult as to the means of rejoining each other and living together.' Having formed this resolve, and embraced a thousand times, they separated with many tears and sobs. The young lady implored her husband to take up his abode in the town nearest to Verona, and not to go so far as Rome, nor even as Florence, as he had expressed a wish to do.

"A few days afterwards Romeo, who hitherto had carefully concealed himself within the monastery of St Francis, in company with Father Lorenzo, decided upon leaving, and repaired to Mantua. He arrived there in a condition of health which caused fears to be entertained for his life, after having expressly desired the servitor of his wife immediately to communicate to Father Lorenzo anything that might be said or done in the house of Juliet's father relative to her or to her husband, and to conform exactly to his mistress' orders, if he wished to receive the remainder of the recompense that he had promised to him.

"Romeo had been gone for several days, and his young wife, yielding to a grief which was continually augmenting, rapidly dimmed the brilliancy of her youth and her beauty. Her mother, who loved her tenderly, on perceiving this change, frequently questioned her as to its cause; she would say, whilst lavishing upon her a thousand caresses:

"'Ah! my beloved daughter, whom I love as much as my own life, whence proceeds the grief which for some time past has afflicted you? You cannot remain alone for a moment without weeping. Is there anything you wish for? Tell me this, confide implicity in me, your mother, and be certain that to restore your lost cheerfulness I will refuse you nothing which can be reasonably granted.' Nevertheless she could obtain from her daughter only reasons which were inadequate to account for the tears she was continually shedding. She thought that perhaps her daughter wished to become married, and that, whether through shame or from the fear of being refused, she did not venture to avow it. She therefore concluded, far from imagining that the course she proposed might hasten her daughter's death, that she had discovered the means to restore her health. She therefore sought her husband, and said to him: 'Signor Antonio, for some days past I have observed that our daughter often weeps bitterly, and grief has so altered her features that, as you yourself may have perceived, she is scarcely recognizable; and although I have often entreated her to inform me of the cause, I have never been satisfied upon this point, and I cannot imagine

what it can be if not the desire to be married, a desire that she does not venture to express. It is my opinion, therefore, that she should be married, before her health becomes quite destroyed, especially as she was eighteen on the fête-day of St Euphemia, and that the beauty of women seldom increases after that age; on the contrary, it is not wise to keep young girls at home too long, although I fear nothing on the part of our daughter. Let us, therefore, look out for a husband suitable for her.' Signor Antonio replied that he considered it right that his daughter should be married, and praised her greatly for having kept this desire within herself, without communicating it to any one. A few days afterwards, he began to treat on the subject of marriage with one of the counts de Lodrone. When the matter was almost on the point of being concluded, thinking to cause her daughter great pleasure, her mother said to her: 'You may rejoice now, my daughter; for before long you will be worthily married to a great nobleman, and then we shall see the end of your sadness, the cause of which, by Heaven's help, I succeeded in divining, although you always refused to confess it to me; and on account of which your father and I have taken measures such as are likely to satisfy you.'

"At these words, Juliet was unable to restrain her tears; upon which her mother said to her: 'Think you that I am only joking? Well, then! before eight days are over you will be the wife of a handsome young lord, of the family of the counts of Lodrone.' At this the young lady's sobs were redoubled, and the mother, still caressing her, said: 'I can see, my daughter,

that this is not what will make you happy?' To which Juliet answered: 'No, my mother, assuredly not, I should not by this be rendered happy.' 'What, then, do you wish for?' replied the mother, 'tell it, without reserve, to me, who am so anxious to do everything that can please you.' 'I wish for nothing but to die,' replied Juliet in despair. From this reply Madame Giovana (such was the mother's name), who was a woman gifted with much perception, understood that her daughter already nourished a passion; and after saying a few more words to her, withdrew.

"When Signor Antonio returned that evening, his wife informed him of her daughter's answer, at which he was much grieved. This good father thought, therefore, that it would be prudent, before carrying any further the preparations for this marriage, and engaging his word, to call his daughter before him and obtain from her an explanation. He therefore caused her to be summoned, and said to her: 'Juliet, I have arranged for you a noble marriage, are you glad of this?' The young girl, after hesitating for a few moments, answered: 'No, my father, I am not glad of it.' 'Why!' exclaimed the father, 'do you wish, then, to become a nun?' 'Oh Heaven! do not ask me,' said she, her voice stifled with sobs. 'I can see,' then resumed the father, 'that this is not your vocation; but tranquillize yourself, my child, for my intention is to marry you to one of the counts of Lodrone.' 'That can never be!' returned Juliet, bursting into tears. Then Signor Antonio, greatly angered, threatened her with the most rigorous treatment

should she be bold enough to place herself in opposition to his will, and if, moreover, she did not communicate to him the reason of her grief; but, being unable to obtain from her anything save tears, he quitted the room in great displeasure, leaving her with her mother, who in vain endeavoured to ascertain her daughter's true sentiments. Juliet had already told to a domestic, named Peter, who was in her confidence, all that her mother had said to her; she had even sworn before him that she would poison herself rather than accept any one save Romeo for a husband. Peter, on the other hand, according to the orders he had received, had communicated this information to Romeo, through the medium of the priest. Romeo had written to Juliet, urging her to let nothing in the world induce her to consent to the marriage which had been proposed to her, or to reveal their love, assuring her that within eight or ten days he would have taken measures to remove her from her father's house. In the meanwhile, Signor Antonio and Madame Giovana were unable, either by caresses or by threats, to induce their daughter to reveal to them the cause of her refusal to marry, or to whom her heart was engaged, even after Madame Giovana had several times said to her: 'Come, my daughter, my dear child, cease grieving; you shall have the husband of your choice, even were he a Montecchi, which I am quite certain is impossible.' And as Juliet answered only by sobs and tears, this conduct strengthened more and more the suspicions of her parents, who resolved to conclude as soon as possible the marriage they were negociating with

Count de Lodrone. Juliet, when she learned what was taking place, was overwhelmed with grief, and, unable to see how such a misfortune was to be avoided, continually called upon death to rescue her.

"She, however, resolved to confide her grief to Father Lorenzo, the person from whom, after Romeo, she hoped to derive the greatest consolation, having heard her husband say that this priest was a man of great mental resources, and capable of doing extraordinary and marvellous things. With this purpose, she one day said to Madame Giovana: 'My mother, do not be surprised that I have not told you the cause of my tears; I must confess to you that I do not know it myself. Only, I feel within me so deep a melancholy that everything is distasteful to me, even my own existence. You thus perceive that, far from being able to confide the reason of my sadness to you or to my father, I cannot even account for it to myself, unless indeed it be occasioned through my having forgotten some sin in my last confession. I should wish, if this be agreeable to yourself, to confess myself afresh, so that, at the approaching festival of the Ascension, I may receive, as a sovereign remedy to my anguish, the holy purification of the sacred body of our divine Saviour.' Her mother at once consented, telling her that she would be greatly pleased by her so doing.

"Two days subsequently, having accompanied her daughter to the convent of St Francis, she took her to Father Lorenzo, whom she had previously seen, in order to implore him to endeavour to ascertain, from her daughter's confession, the cause of her grief.

"The young lady, as soon as she had assured herself that her mother had left them, hastened, in a faltering voice, to inform Father Lorenzo of the true origin of her woe; she implored him, in the name of the mutual friendship which existed between her husband and himself, to aid her by his support in the dangerous position in which she was placed. 'But what can I do, my dearly beloved daughter,' replied the venerable father, 'whilst the enmity between your family and that of your husband continues?' 'I know, my father,' said the disconsolate young lady, 'that you are possessed of many rare acquirements, and that you might aid me in a thousand ways; but, if you will not render me any other service, grant me at least this one. I can see that everything is being prepared for my wedding, which it is intended to celebrate at one of my father's palaces, situated upon the road to Mantua, two miles from this spot; I am to be taken there in order that I may have less power to refuse the husband they wish to give me; no sooner shall I be there than he who is to wed me will thither repair also. I implore you, therefore, my father, to give me a poison so powerful that it may at once deliver us, myself from such torture and Romeo from this disgrace, otherwise I shall be reduced to plunge a dagger into my bosom, which would be still more terrible to me, and more painful for my husband.'

"Father Lorenzo, seeing in what despair was this young lady, and knowing how much he himself was in the power of Romeo, of whom without any doubt he would make an enemy if he did not prevent such a

misfortune, replied in these terms: 'You well know, Juliet, that I am the confessor of at least one half of the persons belonging to the city; that there is not one of them who has not for me the greatest consideration; that, moreover, there is not a will or a reconciliation made without my intervention. For this reason, I would not, for all the gold in the world, be subject to any scandal, or have it known that I have been mixed up in this affair. Nevertheless, the kindly feeling I have both for you and for your husband may induce me to do for you what I have never yet done for any other. It must be well understood, however, that you promise me to keep everything a profound secret.' 'Give me this poison in all security, my father,' resumed Juliet, 'and be assured that no one in the world shall ever know . . . . 'It is not poison that I shall give you, it would be too great a pity that so beautiful and young a girl should perish thus; but, if you have courage enough to do what I will tell you, I flatter myself that I shall afterwards be able to place you in your husband's hands.

"'You are aware that the tomb of the Cappelletti is situated in our cemetery, outside this church; well! I will give you a powder which you will take, it will cause you to sleep for about forty-eight hours, but in such wise that any one who may be called in to see you, however skilful he may be in medicine, will declare you to be lifeless.

"'Then the tomb will be arranged for you as though you were really dead; and, at the proper time, I will come and remove you, and will keep you in my cell

until the period of the forthcoming meeting of the chapter at Mantua, which I have to attend; I will take you with me disguised in the attire of one of our brothers, and there I will return you to your husband's arms.

"'But, tell me, will you not be frightened by reason of your cousin Tebaldo, whose body has so recently been deposited within the tomb?' The young lady, overjoyed beforehand by the success which she anticipated, replied; 'My father, I would not hesitate to encounter even the flames of the infernal regions in order to succeed in rejoining my husband.' 'Well, then, my daughter,' said the good priest to her, 'since you have formed this firm resolve, it will be a real pleasure to assist you; but, before undertaking anything, I consider it advisable that you should communicate everything to Romeo in your own hand-writing, so as to avoid the acts of violence and despair to which he might be driven if he thought you were really dead, for I well know the extent of his love for you.

"'Monks of our order are continually travelling to and from Mantua, where, as you know, your husband is at present; arrange to let me have your letter quickly, and I will immediately forward it to him by a trustworthy messenger.' Having thus spoken, the good priest left the young lady in the confessional, and hastened to his cell, whence he shortly returned with a little box filled with the powder of which he had spoken. He said to Juliet, as he handed it to her: 'Take this powder, my daughter, and, whenever you may think advisable, mix it, three or four hours after sunset,

with some pure water, which you may afterwards drink without fear. At the end of two hours its effect will begin, and this, without any doubt, will enable us to succeed in our design; but above all, do not forget first to send me the letter for your husband; this is a very important point.'

"Juliet, having received the powder from Father Lorenzo, at once returned to her mother, and addressing her with a cheerful air, said: 'Truly, madame, Father Lorenzo is the best confessor in the world; he has so consoled and encouraged me that nothing remains of my past sadness.' 'Ah! so much the better, my dear child,' replied the mother, who had herself recovered her happiness on witnessing that of her daughter; 'do not forget to express to him your gratitude by frequent alms, for the convent is very poor;' and thus conversing, they returned together to their house.

"In fact, after this confession, Juliet recovered all her wonted gaiety, and Signor Antonio and Madame Giovana forgot the suspicion they had entertained to the effect that she cherished in her heart a secret affection; they ascribed to waywardness the tears that for some time past they had seen her shed; so that they would willingly have left her in repose, without further alluding to the subject of marriage, had they not proceeded so far with the affair that it was impossible to retract without covering themselves with ridicule in the eyes of the whole town, and incurring the animadversion of the counts of Lodrone.

"When things were at this point, the young nobleman expressed a desire to introduce his future wife to

some persons of his family, and as the health of Madame Giovana did not at that moment allow her to accompany her daughter, two of the aunts of Juliet repaired with her to the palace of which we have already spoken, which was about two miles from Verona. To this Juliet opposed no resistance; but thinking that her father caused her to be taken to this spot in order to place her in the hands of her intended, who would have been to her a second husband, she took care to provide herself with the powder that Father Lorenzo had given her. After sunset on the night which followed her arrival, she called to her a young girl whom she had brought up, who generally slept in her room, and whom she treated almost as a sister, and requested her to bring a cup of spring water, saying that she was tormented with a burning thirst. She threw into this cup the whole of the powder of which the effects were so prodigious, and drank off the water at a draught. One of the aunts who accompanied her having at this moment awakened, Juliet said aloud, in the presence of this aunt and of the young girl: 'Certainly my father shall never marry me against my will, if I can prevent it.' These two women, who were possessed of but little shrewdness, although they had seen her swallow the powder, which she said she had added to the water only for the purpose of refreshing herself, and had heard the words we have just given, suspected nothing; and, sleep getting the upper hand, they were soon again slumbering.

"Juliet extinguished her light, then under some pretext left her bed, dressed herself completely, and

again lay down, arranging herself upon the bed as though she were really to die, crossed her two hands upon her breast, and awaited the effect of the beverage she had taken. Two hours afterwards she became cold and motionless as death.

"Morning having dawned, and the sun being already high above the horizon, they found Juliet stretched upon her bed, as we have described; they tried to awaken her, and, not being able to succeed, perceived that she was already quite cold. Then the young girl who had slept by her, as well as the aunt, recalled the circumstance of the powder and the water she had drunk; and, seeing all the preparations she had made, they could no longer doubt but that she had poisoned herself. At these news, every one burst into sobs and tears, particularly the young girl who was in her service. She called upon her by her name, saying: 'My dear mistress, this then is the explanation of the last words I heard you utter: *Certainly my father shall never marry me against my will!* It was, then, to deceive me that you asked for the cold water that I unsuspectingly gave you, and which you cruelly used to compass a death which was to make me so wretched. Oh! unfortunate that I am! whom am I to blame for this? Is it death, or is it myself? Alas! dear mistress, why did you despise in death the companionship of that faithful servant to whom in your lifetime you showed so much kindness, and who would have died with you as willingly as she would have spent her life in your service? Why, O my beloved mistress, was I chosen to bring you with my own hands the means

to take away your life, and leave me wretched and forsaken? It is, then, I, wretch that I am, I alone, who at one stroke have given death to you, your father, your mother, and yourself!'

"Thus speaking, the unhappy young girl threw herself upon the bed of her mistress, whom she pressed tightly to her bosom, whilst bathing her with her tears.

"Signor Antonio, who was not far from the spot, hearing the outcry, came all in a tremble to the room of his daughter, whom he found motionless. He was then informed of everything that had happened during the night, and of his daughter's last words. Although he looked upon the fact of her death as certain, still, in order that he might have no reproach to bring against himself, he at once sent off to Verona for his own physician, who was a very learned man, and of great renown in the city. The latter, after having examined the young lady, and felt her pulse, declared that death must have taken place six hours previously, by the effect of the poison. At these words the unfortunate father, seeing that there was now no hope, gave himself up to despair, and shed a torrent of tears.

"These fatal news, repeated from mouth to mouth, soon reached the ears of the unhappy mother, who had remained at Verona. When she heard of this misfortune, she fell down senseless, and as though struck by lightning; and when she recovered her senses she beat her breast and bruised her body, and, in the accents of despair, continually called upon her cherished daughter, filling the air with her lamentations. 'Art thou then dead, my darling Juliet?' cried she,

'you, the only support of my old age? how could you so cruelly forsake your unhappy mother, without even addressing to her one last word? Why, at least, was I not there to close your beautiful eyes, to render the last duties to thy mortal remains? Can you have forgotten, my sweet daughter, in your last hour that this desperate resolve would be your mother's death-blow? Oh you who hear me, help me to die; and if your hearts be not completely deadened to pity, if you be not loth to render me a service, for mercy's sake end my existence before I am consumed by my grief. And thou, sovereign Master of heaven, since death comes not so swiftly as I wish, let thy lightning deliver me from a life that is now unbearable.' Several of the ladies about her hastened to place her upon her bed, whilst others employed all their eloquence to console her; but it was in vain, she ceased not to moan and lament. In the mean time, Juliet was removed from the spot where she was, and transported to Verona, where the funeral ceremony took place in the presence of an immense assemblage of relatives and friends, who, in the deepest mourning and with the utmost sadness, accompanied her to the cemetery of St Francis, where she was interred within the family tomb.

"Father Lorenzo, being obliged to go to some distance from the city upon business relating to his convent, had entrusted the letter which Juliet had written to her husband to a father who was about to proceed to Mantua, with express orders to deliver it only to Romeo himself. The brother who was en-

trusted with this document had called two or three times at Romeo's home, where, unfortunately, he had never found him at home. Unwilling, however, to leave the letter with any other person, he still kept it. It happened that Peter, who believed his mistress to be dead, after calling at the convent of St Francis at Verona, and not finding Father Lorenzo there, determined in despair himself to bear to Romeo the fatal news of Juliet's death.

"With this intention, Peter left Verona after mid-day, and travelled all the following night in the direction of Mantua, where he arrived very early on the next morning. Having found Romeo, who had not yet received Juliet's letter, he told him with many tears that Juliet was dead, that he had seen her borne to her grave, and, lastly, he gave him a detailed account of all she had said and done up to her last moments.

"Scarcely had Romeo been informed of these fatal news, when a livid paleness overspread his countenance, and, having drawn his sword, he was on the point of killing himself, when those who were present prevented him. 'Why,' cried he, 'should you restrain me? My life cannot now last long, since I have lost her who was to me a thousand times dearer than existence itself.

"'Ah! my beloved Juliet, it is I alone who have caused thy death, by not taking thee from thy father's house. You have chosen to die rather than live separated from me; could it be possible that the fear of death should induce me to live without you? Oh,

no! that can never be!' Then turning towards Peter, he gave him some black attire belonging to himself (he was at that time in mourning for a relation who had made him her heir), and said to him: 'My dear Peter, you may now withdraw.'

"Having been left alone, Romeo long reflected upon what was to be done under these circumstances; at length, concluding that death was far preferable to life, and after having disguised himself in peasant's attire, he opened a closet in which he had long kept in reserve a phial of serpent-water, placed it in his sleeve, and started for Verona. He had quite made up his mind to use this in case he was stopped upon the road; for, if he fell into the hands of justice, being banished, he would be sentenced to death: but he wished to end his life near to Juliet.

"Fortune was favourable to the execution of this latter project, for, on the very evening of the day following that in which his wife had been placed in her tomb, Romeo entered Verona without having been recognized by any one. He waited until nightfall, when the whole city was plunged in silence and repose, in order to repair to the convent of St Francis, in which the tomb was situated.

"This church was in the spot named *Cittadella*, where at this time the monks occupied the same convent that had been inhabited by St Francis. Subsequently, they left it, I know not wherefore, and came to reside at the burg of Saint Zeno, in the spot which is named St Bernadin.

"In juxtaposition to the exterior walls of this

church were several tombs constructed of stone; one of these was the ancient sepulchre of the Cappelletti, and contained the young and beautiful Juliet. Romeo having approached this last resting-place, about the fourth hour after sunset, was able after a few vigorous endeavours to raise the stone which closed up the tomb; he then supported it in the air, so that it might not close again over him, by means of some strong pieces of wood which he had brought, and then entered the vault.

"This unfortunate lover had been careful to bring with him a lantern, in order that he might once more, even after her death, contemplate the features of his beloved Juliet. As soon as he perceived her lying amidst bones and fragments of coffins, he exclaimed amidst his deep grief: 'Beautiful eyes, which, so long as Heaven willed it, appeared to mine so clear and bright! O lovely mouth, that I so often have pressed with delight! O sweet bosom, which has contained my heart with so much happiness for me, how do I find you now deprived of light, mute and cold? How can I now see, speak, and live without you? Oh, unfortunate wife, to what a fatal abode has led that love which requires that this small space should enclose two unfortunate lovers! Alas! this was not its promise when I felt its flame the first time that I saw thee. O wretched life! why should I keep thee longer?' He covered with kisses the eyes, mouth, and breast of his Juliet, and, weeping more and more bitterly, exclaimed: 'O gloomy vaults which enclose this spot, would that you might fall upon me, that my

life might be sooner ended! But, since death is possible to whosoever desires it, it would be a cowardice in one who so earnestly calls for it not to take it from his own hand.'

"He then took the phial which contained the poison he had brought from Mantua, and continued in these terms: 'I cannot understand what destiny leads me hither to die amidst my enemies, amidst those whom I slew with my own hand, and to be buried in their own sepulchre; but, oh, my soul! since to die beside my cherished wife is the only joy I now may taste in this world, let me no longer defer it.' Then, lovingly pressing to his breast the body of his dear Juliet, he exclaimed: 'O object of my love, the sole end of all my desire, if thy soul in escaping has left thee any consciousness, if it witness my cruel death, I beg of thee not to be displeased that, having been deprived during thy lifetime of the happiness of openly bearing the title of thy husband, I should at least have the privilege of secretly dying by thy side.' And, still holding her closely embraced, he awaited death.

"The hour had now, however, arrived for Juliet to awake. As consciousness began to return, feeling herself thus pressed by some one, she heaved a deep sigh, and exclaimed: 'Oh, Heaven! where am I? Whose are these embraces? Unhappy that I am! who is it thus presses me?' And thinking that it might be Father Lorenzo, she said: 'Is it thus, my father, that you keep faith with Romeo? Is it thus that you restore me to him?' Romeo, perceiving

that his wife was returning to life, was overjoyed. 'O my sweet Juliet!' said he, 'do you not recognize me? Do you not perceive that it is I, your unfortunate husband, who have come alone and in secret to die by your side?' Juliet, finding that she was within the tomb, and feeling that she was in the arms of a man who asserted himself to be Romeo, was beside herself; and, having first pushed him from her, she earnestly scanned his features, and soon recognizing him, lavished upon her lover the most tender caresses, saying: 'Oh, my dear Romeo! what can have brought you here, exposing you to so much danger? Was it not sufficient that you should know through my letters how, with the assistance of Father Lorenzo, I was to feign death, in order to be able very shortly to come to you?' The unhappy young man, then understanding what a great mistake he had made in poisoning himself, began to lament in these terms: 'Oh! what a fatal destiny! oh! unhappy Romeo! oh! most unfortunate of lovers! No letter has ever informed me of what you now tell me.'

"Romeo then described how Peter had assured him of Juliet's death, and how, in his despair, he had repaired to the tomb, where, by the side of his bride, and in order no longer to be separated from her, he had taken a subtile poison, of which he began to experience the effects, that his limbs were growing cold, and that for him death was at hand.

"The unhappy Juliet, upon hearing this discourse, was seized with such grief that, in a paroxysm of despair, she tore her hair and struck her innocent breast.

"Become more pale than death, she again and again embraced Romeo, whom weakness and pain had caused to fall to the ground, and who, with his face turned towards heaven, was stretched at the feet of his bride. She, all trembling and suffocated by her sobs, shedding over him a torrent of tears, said to him: "It is then for me and in my presence, my husband, that you came of your own free will here to die, but do you think that Heaven will allow me to survive you, even for a few moments? Oh! no. Would at least that I could give my life for yours, and be alone to die!'

"Romeo, in a faltering voice, replied to her: 'If ever my troth and my love have been dear to you, live, I implore you, live, since you may yet enjoy life! thou who art my sweetest hope. I desire that after my death existence may not yet appear odious to you, at least through the recollection of him whose love was kindled by your beauty to such a degree that he sought your presence even here.' 'Ah!' replied Juliet, 'since you have sacrificed your life by reason of my death, which was but feigned, what should not I do, dear husband, by reason of your death, which, alas! is but too real? My only regret is to be without the means of dying before you; and I am angry with myself for being yet alive at the moment of losing you. But I trust it will not be long before your Juliet, the innocent cause of your death, shall share your fate.' It was with great difficulty that she could pronounce these last words, and, overwhelmed with grief; she awaited the last sighs of Romeo, her beloved, whose end was rapidly approaching.

"In the mean while, Father Lorenzo had been informed of the time and place at which Juliet had taken the powder that he had given her, and that, supposing her to be dead, they had placed her within the tomb. Knowing, moreover, that the period when the powder would lose its virtue was about to arrive, he took with him one of the monks who was devoted to him, and they both left the convent, and repaired to the tomb of the Cappelletti, about one hour before daybreak. As soon as they arrived there, they heard the lamentations and sobs of Juliet; and seeing through an opening a light within the monument, Father Lorenzo was at first greatly surprised. He thought, however, that Juliet, by some means that she had contrived, had brought with her a lantern, and that upon awakening she had been frightened by the ghost of some dead person, or else by the anticipation of being for ever imprisoned within this tomb. He therefore hastened, with the aid of the monk who accompanied him, to open the tomb. He then perceived Juliet, who, with dishevelled hair, moaning and seated upon the ground, was pressing to her bosom her expiring husband.

"Then Father Lorenzo spoke to Juliet, and said: 'Were you then afraid, my beloved daughter, that I should leave you here to die?'

"Upon hearing the monk speak, her tears redoubled, and she replied: 'Far from that, my only fear is that you should take me hence alive. Oh! in the name of God's mercy, close up this sepulchre, and leave me to die; or else give me a dagger, so

that by plunging it into my breast, I may escape this horrible torment. Oh! my father! my father! is it, then, thus that you sent my letter to Mantua? Is it thus that I am to be wedded, and that you restore me into Romeo's hands? See him upon my bosom, this unfortunate husband, already dead!' She then described all that had taken place, and pointed out to him the desperate condition of Romeo.

"Father Lorenzo, upon hearing the narrative of such fatal events, was thunderstruck, and as though bereft of his senses; and, gazing upon his young friend at the point of death, he said to him: 'Ah! Romeo, what misfortune is this that tears you from me? Speak to me once more, turn your eyes towards me. Ah! dear Romeo! see your tender Juliet, she begs of you to look at her, at least answer her, your Juliet, who holds you in her arms.'

"Romeo, at the sweet name of his cherished wife, with difficulty raised his eyelids, already heavy with the approach of death, and, having lovingly fixed his eyes upon Juliet, again closed them: shortly afterwards, heaving a deep sigh, he expired amid horrible convulsions.

"This unfortunate lover having died in the manner I have described, and daylight beginning to appear, after much weeping and groaning, Father Lorenzo said to the young lady: 'And you, Juliet, what do you intend to do?' 'I have made up my mind to die here,' replied she. 'Why so, my daughter?' returned the priest; 'one should not speak in that manner, and allow oneself to be overcome by despair. Leave

this fatal spot: although at the present moment I do not know what course to take, I think it will not be difficult to place you for ever in some holy retreat where you may pray God for yourself and for the repose of your husband's soul, in case it might have need of prayers.' 'Ah! my father,' replied Juliet, 'I ask you for only one favour, and I trust you will not refuse me it, by reason of the friendship which linked you to Romeo (as she spoke to him thus she pointed to the body of her husband); the sole favour I ask of you is to keep secret our death, so that our bodies may remain united here. And if by chance it should happen to become known, I beg of you, in the name of this same friendship, to entreat the father of Romeo, and mine, not to prevent the same tomb from enclosing the ashes of two lovers whom love consumed with the same fire and led to the same death.' Having concluded these words, she turned towards Romeo, whose head she had laid upon a cushion which had been left within the tomb, carefully closed her husband's eyes, and bathing with tears his face already chilled by the icy touch of death: 'Why should I survive thee?' she cried, 'what duty towards thee remains there to be fulfilled beyond that of accompanying thee to the abode of the dead? No, there is nothing but for me to follow thee, so that death itself, which alone could separate us, might even become a link to unite us for ever.' As she concluded these words, a terrible idea wholly took possession of her mind, and, thinking only of the loss of her dear Romeo, she determined not to survive him. Having then remained for a few moments

motionless, holding her breath, she gave a deep sigh, and, uttering a terrible scream, fell dead upon the inanimate body of her husband.

"When Father Lorenzo ascertained that the young lady was really dead, he was seized with so great a compassion that he knew not what to do; and he and his companion, overcome with the deepest grief, remained weeping over these two unfortunate lovers.

"In the mean time, the guard of the Podestà, being in search of some robbers, happened to pass by the spot. Seeing a light within the tomb, they hastened up, and there found the two monks. 'My reverends, what are you doing here at this hour? Are you engaged in charms and witchcraft upon this sepulchre?'

"At the sight of these officers of justice, whom Father Lorenzo easily recognized, he was seized with consternation. He, however, said to them: 'Let not any of you venture to approach me, for you have no right over a man of my condition; if you have anything to ask me, make your inquiries elsewhere.' Then the chief addressed him as follows: 'We wish to know why you have opened the sepulchre of the Cappelletti, within which was yesterday laid a young lady belonging to that family; and if I did not know you, reverend Father Lorenzo, to be a respectable man, I should think that you were here for the purpose of stripping the dead.' The two monks, having extinguished their lights, replied, 'We shall not tell you what we are doing here, because you have not the right to inquire.' 'That is true,' returned the chief, 'but I shall not fail at once to report you to the sovereign.'

Father Lorenzo, engrossed by the painful feelings which the sad spectacle he had witnessed awakened within him, replied, 'Make your report, and state what you please;' and, having hastened to close the tomb, he and his companion returned to the church.

"It was almost broad daylight when the priests succeeded in getting rid of the officers of justice, so that one of the latter at once repaired to the house of one of the Cappelletti, to whom he gave an account of what had taken place between them and the monks at the tomb of his family. This Cappelletti, who perhaps was aware of the intimacy which had existed between Romeo and Father Lorenzo, proceeded without delay to the sovereign, whom he begged to ascertain from Father Lorenzo himself what had taken him at such an hour to the tomb of the Cappelletti, and even to employ force in case the monk should refuse to give the explanations required of him. The sovereign, having had guards so placed as to prevent the monk from making his escape, caused the latter to be summoned to appear before him.

"The priest, being thus compelled, accordingly appeared before his sovereign, who put this question to him: 'What were you seeking this morning in the tomb of the Cappelletti? tell us this, for we absolutely wish to know.' 'My Lord,' then replied the monk, 'I am perfectly willing to tell your Lordship. I was confessor to the daughter of Antonio Cappelletti, who died a few days since in so strange a manner, and as my spiritual daughter she had inspired me with great interest. Having been unable to attend her

funeral, I went to her tomb in order to repeat over her coffin certain orisons, which, immediately repeated nine times consecutively over a body, deliver its soul from the pains of purgatory; and as few persons know these prayers or understand this devotion, some ignorant people assume that my object was to strip the dead. I know not whether I have the appearance of a brigand capable of such actions, but this poor gown and this girdle (pointing to his attire) suffice for my ambition; I attach no greater importance to all the treasures possessed by the living than I do to the spoils of two dead people, and any one would be grievously mistaken in imputing to me an evil intent.'

"The sovereign would readily have given faith to the monk's discourse, had it not happened that many of the brothers who were inimical to Father Lorenzo, having heard how he had been found within the tomb, wished in their turn to enter it. As soon as the latter opened it and saw the dead body of Romeo Montecchi, they hastened with great outcry to the sovereign, who was still conversing with Father Lorenzo, and informed him that they had found Romeo Montecchi dead, in the same tomb at which the two monks had been surprised during the night. This, to most people, appeared impossible, and no one would believe in it.

"Father Lorenzo, however, seeing that he could no longer conceal what he had so great a desire to keep secret, threw himself upon his knees before the sovereign, and said to him; 'Pardon me, my Lord, if I have not truly answered the questions which you addressed to me; for it is not through malice nor in

the hope of deriving any profit that I committed this fault, but with the intention only of keeping the promises I made to an unfortunate married couple who have sacrificed their lives to the love that bound them together.' The priest was thus obliged to give in detail, and in presence of all those who were there assembled, the whole of this history.

"Upon hearing this narrative, Bartolomeo della Scala was so strongly moved with compassion as to be affected even to tears. He desired himself to see the two corpses, and repaired to the tomb, followed by a large number of people. He caused the two lovers to be removed to the church of St Francis, where they were placed upon two couches.

"At the same time the fathers of the unfortunate married couple came to the church to weep over the remains of their children; and, although they had been such enemies, they were unable to resist the generous impulse aroused within them by their compassion for the ill-fated lovers, and mutually embraced each other; so that the long enmity which had existed between the two families, and had never yielded either to the prayers of friends, or to the menaces of the sovereign, or to private interest, and which even time had not extinguished, ceased at length through the death of this unfortunate couple.

"A magnificent monument was built in their honour, upon which a few days sufficed to engrave their history. The two lovers were laid within it in solemn pomp, in the presence of the sovereign, of the two families, and of a great assemblage of people from

the town, who were moved with pity for so tragical a fate."

Here end the unfortunate lives of Romeo Montecchi and Juliet Cappelletti.

In this we have the first germ of the tragedy. Here we have seen the romancer; now let us view the poet.

AND now here is the poet who will give speech, life, movement to the narrative. Suppose yourself to be a spectator amongst the audience, look and listen.

The scene represents a public place in Verona.

The persons represented are:

The PRINCE OF VERONA.

PARIS, a young nobleman.

MONTAGUE, } Heads of two houses at variance with
CAPULET, } each other.

An old man, uncle to Capulet.

ROMEO, son to Montague.

MERCUTIO, kinsman to the Prince and friend to Romeo.

BENVOLIO, nephew to Montague and friend to Romeo.

TYBALT, nephew to Capulet.

FRIAR LAWRENCE, a Franciscan monk.

FRIAR JOHN, of the same order.

BALTHAZAR, page to Romeo.

SAMPSON, } servants to Capulet.
GREGORY, }

ABRAM, servant to Montague.
PETER, servant to nurse.
An Apothecary.
A Clown, or the English Scapin of the play.
Three Musicians.
A Page.
An Officer.
LADY MONTAGUE, wife to Montague.
LADY CAPULET, wife to Capulet.
JULIET, daughter to Capulet.
Nurse to Juliet.
Citizens of Verona; several men and women, relations to both houses; Maskers, Guards, Watchmen, and Attendants.

SCENE. *During the greater part of the play, in Verona; once, in the fifth act, in Mantua.*

If we are asked what business has the *clown* amidst the characters of blood and tears in a tragedy, we must answer that this is evidently a concession of the poet to the habits of the times, a bone thrown to his pit, which he himself despised, but which he contemptuously tossed to spectators desirous to laugh and to weep at the same time. But despite all that may have been said, twenty years ago, by the exaggerated fanatics of the *romantic* taste, and by M. Hugo himself, laughter is prejudicial to tears, and tears to laughter; the contrast is too strong to be natural. Nothing similar is found in the sublime dramas of antiquity, because antiquity was nearer to nature than we are. "It surprises me," said Napoleon, a man of

antique taste, to Schiller and to Goethe, in the *salon* of the Duchess of Weimar, "that men of genius, like yourselves, endeavour to imitate Shakspeare in this, and that, unlike the ancients and unlike the French, you do not understand that a well-defined style is a condition of art of every kind, and that to endeavour to combine in the same play the comic humour of Molière and the tragic humour of Corneille, is to make them both grimace." Goethe and Schiller felt the truth of this; but Shakspeare was then the god of the stage, and the Germans could give no reason save that of imitation, that reason of those who can find no other.

THE first scene enables the spectator at once to realize the condition of Verona, divided into adverse factions and aristocratic houses, for or against whom the people of Verona took part on every occasion of disturbance, in spite of the efforts of the sovereign prince of Verona, John de la Scala, who endeavours to extinguish the ancient firebrands of discord by means of the stern authority of his absolute government.

Two groups of men belonging to the populace meet in the streets, the one composed of partisans of the Capulets, the other of adherents of the Montagues; they commence by scowling upon each other, then they defy and hustle each other, but without drawing swords. Benvolio and Tybalt, two young noblemen belonging to the party of the Capulets, carried away

by the example, rush, sword in hand, against the partisans of the Montagues; the combat becomes general; but impartial and orderly citizens arrive with their staves, and endeavour to separate the two factions in the name of the law, the prince, and the public peace. The prince himself leaves his palace, and in his anger threatens old Capulet and old Montague, who, upon hearing of the affray, have rushed to the spot; he leads away Montague, and he enjoins upon Capulet to appear that evening at his palace to hear his sentence.

"And where was Romeo?" inquired Lady Montague of Benvolio, a friend of her son, who conducts her back to her palace. "I am glad he was not at this fray."

"— Madam," replies Benvolio in a solemn tone and in poetic rhythm,

"An hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad;
Where—underneath the grove of sycamore,
That westward rooteth from the city's side,
So early walking did I see your son:
Towards him I made; but he was 'ware of me,
And stole into the covert of the wood:
I, measuring his affections by my own,—
That most are busied when they are most alone,—
Pursued my humour, not pursuing his,
And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me."

"Do you know the cause of his melancholy?" inquires of him the mother of Romeo.

"—No," replies Benvolio, "he is as shut up within himself

As is the bud bit by an envious worm,
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun!"

Singular lyrical and elegiac language, which contrasts with the rapid simplicity of tragic dialogue, and which evidences the vain and awkward endeavour on the part of the author to exhibit himself as a descriptive poet, rather than as a concise and precise personage; a confusion of styles and a promiscuousness of taste of which nascent literatures offer a thousand examples, even in the greatest poets; for it is the poet who writes the play, but it is the people who form the taste.

Romeo approaches, and his mother leaves him with his friend, who undertakes to discover his secret.

The dialogue commences, and Romeo confesses to Benvolio that he is madly enamoured with a young beauty of Verona, Rosaline, who eclipses all other beauties, but who remains insensible to his passion.

"O love!" cries Romeo, who in Shakspeare's language more resembles the hero of Cervantes than a young man consumed by real passion,

"O brawling love! O loving hate!
O anything, of nothing first create!
O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this."

And he continues thus:

"Love is a smoke, raised with the fume of sighs;
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
Being vexed, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears:
What is it else? a madness most discreet,
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.
Farewell, my coz.

"She whom I love has the character of Diana:
And in strong proof of chastity well armed,
From love's weak childish bow she lives unharmed,
She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold."

This ambiguous declaration on the part of Romeo of his love for another than Juliet is evidently here introduced with two objects in the mind of the poet: the first, to exhibit to the spectator the melancholic and passionate disposition of Romeo; the second, to express subsequently the irresistible and immeasurable power of the yet unknown beauty of Juliet; since her first radiance banishes from Romeo all this false imaginative love, as the reality eclipses a shadow, and does not even allow his first drama to recur to him when Juliet has once appeared to his sight. As in the case of a modern spiritualistic dream, unity of sentiment might have been preferable to this inconsistency of passion; which we nevertheless hesitate to condemn. In southern natures especially, it has its justification in the sensual character of the passions of the South. Besides, history herself suggested it to the poet. Let us pass over this slight impropriety,

which is perhaps a beauty. Moreover, the fatality which, in *Romeo and Juliet,* is thus first evidenced is an unexpected and implacable divinity which is to appear throughout the whole of the play, and which, in the passion at first sight between these two lovers, is brought into relief by the fact that one of them considered himself safe-guarded by his first love against any seduction of the eyes or of the heart. Thus, neither innocence in Juliet, nor a previous love in Romeo, can avail against it. They see each other, and fatality throws them into each other's arms. The electric current which in our days circles the globe in a few seconds had been invented by fatality, and by Shakspeare in this meeting at the *bal masqué,* which gives to two glances the quickness and the fire of two lightning-flashes.

A SHORT episodic scene between a gentleman of Verona named Paris and old Capulet, who offers to the former his daughter in marriage; an aside on the part of the clown entrusted with the notes of invitation to the ball to be given by the Capulets, here advance and complicate the drama.

The clown meets Romeo and Benvolio, bandies with them a few of the jests of his trade, and tells them that unless they be Montagues they can come to drink and to dance at the festival.

"I will go there masked," said Romeo, "not to enjoy the festivities, but to see the object of my adoration."

Lady Capulet, Juliet's mother, and the nurse of Juliet enter upon the scene. They call Juliet, whom her mother informs of the marriage planned by her father between her and Paris. The nurse supports in most scandalous phraseology the suggestions of Lady Capulet. One could not venture to repeat the gross obscenities uttered by the nurse to the innocent child.

The festivities begin. Romeo, habited as a pilgrim, enters with a group of four or five masks who jest with him at the entrance. Mercutio, one of his friends and the poet of the band, tells them of a dream in which appears Mab the fairy queen. The studied and affected grace of this description has been the admiration of this century of undecided and equivocal taste.

"MER. O then, I see, queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife; and she comes,
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies,
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:
Her waggon-spokes made of long-spinners' legs;
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
The traces, of the smallest spider's web;
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams:
Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film:
Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid.
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,

Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers :—
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love ;
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight,
O'er doctors' fingers, who straight dream on fees ;
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream :
Sometimes she gallops o'er a lawyer's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit :
And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice :
Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats ;
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five-fathom deep ; and then anon,
Drums in his ear ; at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two,
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab,
That plats the manes of horses in the night,
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,
Which, once entangled, much misfortune bodes.
This is the hag," &c. (The immodesty of the imagery here forces the pen to stop with disgust.)

"Let us enter," says Benvolio, "supper is done, and we shall come too late!"

"Too soon, I fear," says Romeo,

"For my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels, and expire the term

Of a despised life, closed in my breast,
By some vile forfeit of untimely death;
But He, that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my sail!—On, lusty gentlemen!"

"Strike, drum!" joyfully exclaims Benvolio as they enter the palace.

A trivial scene between the valets and the maid-servants, around the side-boards, amuses the people.

Old Capulet, full of merriment, enters the hall, followed by Juliet and her nurse, his young kinsman Tybalt, and, lastly, by Romeo and his masked friends.

"Welcome, gentlemen!" says Capulet to them; "ladies that have their feet unplagued with corns will have a bout with you."

The ball commences; the melancholic Romeo does not take part in it.

"What lady's that which doth enrich the hand
Of yonder knight?" inquires he of a valet.

"I know not, sir."

"O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!" continues he, in his ecstasy,

"Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear:
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make happy my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night."

Tybalt, who has overheard these involuntary and

passionate exclamations, says, addressing himself to a page:

"This by his voice should be a Montague,—
Fetch me my rapier, boy. What! dares the slave
Come hither, covered with an antic face,
To fleer and scorn at our solemnity?
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin."

Old Capulet interposes, and, by a few good-natured words, endeavours to calm the indignation of his partisans.

"Let him alone," says he to Tybalt,
"He bears him like a courtly gentleman;
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth:
I would not, for the wealth of all this town,
Here in my house, do him disparagement."

Tybalt, displeased at the indulgence of old Capulet his uncle, retires, uttering a threat of future vengeance.

Romeo advances and takes Juliet's hand:

"If I profane with my unworthy hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,—
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rude touch with a gentle kiss.

JUL. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROM. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JUL. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROM. O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JUL. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROM. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take;
Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.
(*Kissing her.*)

JUL. Then have my lips the sin that they have took."

"I thank you, honest gentleman," says to them old Capulet, as they take their departure.

The nurse, questioned by Romeo, informs him that the young lady he has just kissed is the daughter of the house. He leaves the spot distracted with mingled desire and terror.

Juliet, on the other hand, approaches her nurse, and rapidly questions her in a whisper about Romeo.

"His name is Romeo; he is a Montague, and the son of your mortal enemy."—"Is he married? If he be married," says she to herself, "my grave is like to be my wedding-bed. Prodigious birth of love, that I must love a loathed enemy."

The chorus, which Shakspeare sometimes introduces for the explanation of the situation, contrasts, in its rhymed reflections, the hatred between the two houses and the passion between the two lovers.

The scene which follows shows us Romeo wandering at night beneath the wall of Capulet's garden. This he scales, and springs into the garden; he is perceived by his friends Benvolio and Mercutio, who

make a jest of his new passion, and, in a low voice, address him in a tone of raillery.

"MER. Nay, I'll conjure too.—
Romeo! humours! madam! passion! lover!
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh.
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied;
Cry but—Ah me! couple but—love and dove;
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,
One nickname for her purblind son and heir,
Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,
When King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid.—
He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;
The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.—
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
By her high forehead, and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
That in thy likeness thou appear to us!

(*Romeo hides himself, and remains silent beneath the trees.*)

He jests at scars, that never felt a wound.

(*Juliet appears above, at a window.*)

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks!
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she:
She speaks, yet says she nothing. What of that?
Her eye discourses, I will answer it.—
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright,
That birds would sing, and think it were the morn.—
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

JUL. Ah me!

ROM. She speaks:—
O, speak again, bright angel!

JUL. O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father, and refuse thy name:
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy:
What's in a name? that which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title:—Romeo, quit thy name,
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

ROM. I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo!

JUL. What man art thou, that, thus bescreened in night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROM. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written I would tear the word.

* * * * *

JUL. How cam'st thou hither, tell me? and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROM. Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords; look thou but sweet
And I am proof against their enmity.

JUL. I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROM. I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And, but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JUL. By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROM. By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore washed by the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

JUL. Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny

What I have spoke; but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say—Ay;
And I will take thy word: yet, if thou swear'st,
Thou may'st prove false; at lovers' perjuries
They say Jove laughs. O, gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but, else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
And therefore thou may'st think my 'haviour light:
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was 'ware,
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me;
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROM. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—

JUL. O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROM. What shall I swear by?

JUL. Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ROM. If my heart's dear love—

JUL. Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,

I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say—It lightens. Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart, as that within my breast!

ROM. O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JUL. What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

ROM. The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JUL. I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROM. Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

JUL. But to be frank, and give it thee again,
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have; for both are infinite.

(*Nurse calls within.*)

I hear some noise within: Dear love, adieu!—
Anon, good nurse!—Sweet Montague, be true,
Stay but a little, I will come again.

(*She withdraws from the window.*)

ROM. O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Re-enter JULIET, *above.*

JUL. Three words, dear Romeo, and good-night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where, and what time, thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortune at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee, my love, throughout the world.

NURSE (*within*). Madam!

JUL. I come anon:—But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee,—

NURSE (*within*). Madam!

JUL. By-and-by, I come;—
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow I will send.

ROM. So thrive my soul,—

JUL. A thousand times good night!

(*She quits the window.*)

ROM. A thousand times the worse to want thy light.—
Love goes towards love as schoolboys from their books;
But love from love, towards school with heavy looks.

(*Retiring slowly.*)

Re-enter JULIET, *above.*

JUL. Hist, Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud,
Else would I tear the cave where echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine

With repetition of my Romeo's name.

ROMEO (*retracing his steps*). It is my soul that calls me by my name:

How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JUL. Romeo!

ROM. My sweet!

JUL. At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROM. At the hour of nine.

JUL. I will not fail; 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROM. Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JUL. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Rememb'ring how I love thy company.

ROM. And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

JUL. 'Tis almost morning, I would have thee gone:
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROM. I would I were thy bird?

JUL. Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say—good night, till it be morrow. [*Exit.*

ROM. (*alone*). Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!—

Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell;
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell. [*Exit.*

SCENE VIII.—*Friar Laurence's Cell.*

Enter FRIAR LAURENCE, *with a basket.*

FRI. L. The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
From forth day's pathway, made by Titan's wheels:
Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,
The day to cheer, and night's dank dew to dry,
I must up-fill this osier cage of ours,
With baleful weeds, and precious-juiced flowers.
The earth, that's Nature's mother, is her tomb;
What is her burying grave, that is her womb:
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find;
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different.
O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities:
For nought so vile, that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good, but strain'd from that fair use,
Revolts to vice, and stumbles on abuse.
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied;
And vice sometime's by action dignified.

Enter ROMEO.

FRIAR L. (*taking a flower from the basket*). Within the infant rind of this small flower

Poison hath residence, and medicine power:
For this, being smelt, with that sense cheers each part;
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.
Two such opposed foes encamp them still
In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will;
And, where the worser is predominant,
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

ROM. Good morrow, father!

FRI. Benedicite!
What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?—
Young son, it argues a distempered head,
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;
But where unbruisèd youth with unstuff'd brain
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign:
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure,
Thou art up-roused by some distemperature;
Or if not so, then here I hit it right—
Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.

ROM. That last is true, the sweeter rest was mine.

FRI. God pardon sin! wast thou with Rosaline?

ROM. With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no:
I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

FRI. That's my good son: But where hast thou been then?

ROM. I'll tell thee, ere thou ask it me again.
I have been feasting with mine enemy;
Where to the heart's core one hath wounded me,
That's by me wounded; both our remedies

Within thy help and holy physic lie:
I bear no hatred, blessed man; for lo,
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

FRI. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift;
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

ROM. Then plainly know, my heart's dear love is set
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet:
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine;
And all combined save what thou must combine
By holy marriage: When, and where, and how
We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,
That thou consent to marry us this day.

FRI. Holy Saint Francis! what a change is here!
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine
Hath washed thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste!
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears;
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears;
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear, that is not washed off yet:
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline;
And art thou changed? pronounce this sentence then—
Women may fall when there's no strength in men.

ROM. Thou chidd'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

FRI. For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.
ROM. And bad'st me bury love.
FRI. Not in a grave
To lay one in, another out to have.
ROM. I pray thee, chide not: she, whom I love now,
Doth grace for grace, and love for love allow,
The other did not so.
FRI. O, she knew well
Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell.
But come, young waverer, come go with me,
In one respect I'll thy assistant be;
For this alliance may so happy prove,
To turn your household's rancour to pure love.
ROM. O, let us hence; I stand on sudden haste."

Benvolio and Mercutio again make their appearance on the evening of the same day, for the purpose of railing at Romeo. The nurse meets them; they joke with her in a style that no ribaldry could equal. She demands of Romeo a private interview. Romeo asks her to persuade her young mistress to go in the evening to the confessional of Father Laurence!

"And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey-wall:
Within this hour my man shall be with thee,
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair;
Which to the high top-gallant of my joy
Must be my convoy in the secret night."

The nurse, assured as to the good intentions of Romeo, goes to execute her commission. Juliet, impatiently awaiting her return, soliloquizes as follows:

"The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;
In half an hour she promised to return.

Perchance, she cannot meet him: that's not so—
O, she is lame! love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,
Driving back shadows over low'ring hills;
Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw love,
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill
Of this day's journey; and from nine till twelve
Is three long hours—yet she is not come.
Had she affections, and warm youthful blood,
She'd be as swift in motion as a ball;
My words would bandy her to my sweet love,
And his to me:
But old folks, many feign as they were dead;
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead."

The nurse excites Juliet's impatience by absurd procrastinations, which would be more appropriate to farce than to tragedy, then she delivers her message.

"Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell,
There stays a husband to make you a wife:
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks,
They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.
Hie you to church; I must another way,
To fetch a ladder by the which your love
Must climb a bird's nest soon, when it is dark;
I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.
Go. I'll to dinner; hie you to the cell."

The friar, informed by Romeo, awaits Juliet at the confessional; he receives Romeo and his love, and secretly unites them in marriage.

Whilst the mysterious union is accomplished before the church, and Romeo prepares for his nocturnal ascent to the window of his young wife, a fresh disturbance breaks out in the streets of Verona between the Capulets and the Montagues. Tybalt insults Romeo, who, for the sake of Juliet, a relative of Tybalt, patiently bears this outrage; but the fiery Tybalt kills Mercutio, the friend of Romeo. At this spectacle, Romeo, again attacked by the murderer, draws his sword and involuntarily kills Tybalt. Prince de la Scala arrives upon the spot, and makes inquiry. Benvolio describes to him, not the murder, but the accident * through which the sword of Romeo slew Tybalt. The prince, without listening to anything further, condemned Romeo to perpetual banishment.

Juliet, ignorant of what is taking place, awaits in her nuptial chamber the hour when Romeo is to climb to her balcony by means of the rope-ladder. Love and enthusiasm raise her thoughts to the most exalted lyricism, and her expressions, borrowed from mythology, the sacred language of Italy at this period, are altogether beyond the limits of what is natural.

"Jul. Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phœbus' mansion; such a waggoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.—
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night!

* This is a misconception: the death of Tybalt, according to Shakspeare's showing, was not accidental, nor was the action of Romeo involuntary.—*Translator.*

That run-aways' eyes may wink; and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen!
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties, or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night.—Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:
Hood my unmann'd blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, night! Come, Romeo!—come, thou day in night!
Whiter than snow upon a raven's back.—
Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo: and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.—
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possess'd it; and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoy'd: so tedious is this day,
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child! . . ."

The nurse interrupts this dithyramb to love by informing Juliet that Romeo has just killed her relative Tybalt.

The poet here causes Juliet to utter all the ambiguous exclamations that the Italian poets attributed to their personages under the name of *concetti;* they

aimed at wit instead of sentiment by contrasts of words, which the public, as corrupt in their taste as themselves, were simple enough to admire.

"Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!
Dove-feather'd raven, wolfish-ravening lamb!
Despisèd substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,
A damned saint, an honourable villain!—
O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter
So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous palace!"

True grief recalls her, however, to common sense when she learns that her lover is banished:

"*Romeo is banished*,—to speak that word,
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
All slain, all dead: *Romeo is banished*,
There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
In that word's death; no words can that woe sound.—
Come, cords; come, nurse; I'll to my wedded bed;
And death, not Romeo, for my husband take!"

(It is scarcely necessary again to state here that Juliet makes use of other terms than those we have given. A guard-room might blush at the imagery and the expressions employed by the virgin of Verona, aged fourteen.)

"O find Romeo," says she to the nurse, "give this ring to my true knight, and bid him come to say farewell!"

The nurse hastens to the cell of Friar Laurence, finds Romeo there, and informs him of the sentence of banishment.

The monk reasons with him; he throws himself upon the ground in despair. The nurse give him the wedding-ring, and appoints a *rendez-vous*. A dialogue, passionate on the one hand, sensible on the other, takes place between the friar and nurse and Romeo; passion overflows, and passes from despair to frenzy. Read:

"Rom. Ha! banishment?—Be merciful, say death;
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death; do not say—banishment!

Fri. Hence from Verona art thou banished:
Be patient; for the world is broad and wide.

Rom. There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.
Hence-banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death:—then banishment
Is death mis-term'd: calling death—banishment,
Thou cutt'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil'st upon the stroke that murders me.

Fri. O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind prince,
Taking thy part, hath rush'd aside the law,
And turn'd that black word death to banishment:
This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not.

Rom. 'Tis torture, and not mercy: heaven is here,
Where Juliet lives: and every cat, and dog,
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven, and may look on her,

But Romeo may not.—More validity,
More honourable state, more courtship lives
In carrion flies, than Romeo: they may seize
On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,
And steal immortal blessing from her lips;
Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin;
But Romeo may not; he is banished:
Flies may do this, when I from this must fly:
They are free men, but I am banished.
And say'st thou yet, that exile is not death?
Hadst thou no poison mix'd, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
But—banished—to kill me; banished?
O friar, the damned use that word in hell;
Howlings attend it: How hast thou the heart,
Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,
A sin-absolver, and a friend profess'd,
To mangle me with that word—banishment?

FRI. Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.

ROM. O thou wilt speak again of banishment.

FRI. I'll give thee armour to keep off that word;
Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,
To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

ROM. Yet banished?—hang up philosophy!
Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,
Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom;
It helps not, it prevails not, talk no more.

FRI. O, then I see, that mad men have no ears.

ROM. How should they, when that wise men have no eyes?

FRI. Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.

ROM. Thou canst not speak of what thou dost not feel:

Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,
Doting like me, and like me banished,
Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,
And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

FRI. Arise; one knocks: good Romeo, hide thyself. (*Knocking within.*)

ROM. Not I; unless the breath of heart-sick groans,
Mist-like, infold me from the search of eyes.
(*Knocking.*)

FRI. Hark, how they knock!—Who's there?—Romeo, arise;
Thou wilt be taken:—Stay a while:—stand up;
(*Knocking.*)
Run to my study:—By and by:—God's will!
What wilfulness is this?—I come, I come.
(*Knocking.*)
Who knocks so hard? whence come you? what's your will?

NURSE (*within*). Let me come in, and you shall know my errand;
I come from lady Juliet.

FRI. Welcome then.

Enter Nurse.

NURSE. O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,

Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo?

FRI. There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

NURSE. O, he is even in my mistress' case,
Just in her case!

FRI. O woful sympathy!
Piteous predicament!

NURSE. Even so lies she,
Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering—
Stand up, stand up; stand, an you be a man:
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand;
Why should you fall into so deep an O?

ROM. Nurse!

NURSE. Ah, sir! ah, sir!—Well, death's the end of all.

ROM. Speak'st thou of Juliet? how is it with her?
Doth she not think me an old murderer,
Now I have stain'd the childhood of our joy
With blood removed but little from her own?
Where is she? and how doth she? and what says
My conceal'd lady to our cancell'd love?

NURSE. O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps;
And now falls on her bed; and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls; and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again.

ROM. As if that name,
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murder her; as that name's cursed hand
Murder'd her kinsman—O tell me, friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy

Doth my name lodge? tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion. (*Drawing his sword.*)
FRI. Hold thy desperate hand:
Art thou a man? thy form cries out, thou art;
Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast:
Unseemly woman, in a seeming man!
Or ill-beseeming beast, in seeming both!
Thou hast amazed me: by my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better temper'd.
Hast thou slain Tybalt? wilt thou slay thyself?
And slay thy lady too that lives in thee,
By doing damned hate upon thyself?
Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?
Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
In thee at once: which thou at once wouldst lose.
Fy, fy! thou shamest thy shape, thy love, thy wit;
Which, like an usurer, abound'st in all,
And usest none in that true use indeed
Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit.
Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
Digressing from the valour of a man;
Thy dear love, sworn, but hollow perjury.
Killing that love, which thou hast vow'd to cherish?
Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
Mis-shapen in the conduct of them both,
Like powder in a skill-less soldier's flask,
Is set on fire by thine own ignorance,
And thou dismember'd with thine own defence.
What, rouse thee, man! thy Juliet is alive,
For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead;

There art thou happy: Tybalt would kill thee,
But thou slew'st Tybalt; there art thou happy too:
The law that threaten'd death, becomes thy friend,
And turns it to exile; there art thou happy:
A pack of blessings light upon thy back;
Happiness courts thee in her best array;
But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,
Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love:
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her;
But, look thou stay not till the watch be set,
For then thou canst not pass to Mantua;
Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time
To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back
With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.—
Go before, nurse: commend me to thy lady;
And bid her hasten all the house to bed,
Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto:
Romeo is coming.

NURSE. O Lord, I could have staid here all the night,
To hear good counsel: O, what learning is!
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

ROM. Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

NURSE. Here, sir, a ring she bade me give you, sir;
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

[*Exit Nurse.*

ROM. How well my comfort is revived by this!

FRI. Go hence: good night; and here stands all
your state;—
Either begone before the watch be set,
Or by the break of day disguised from hence:
Sojourn in Mantua; I'll find out your man,
And he shall signify from time to time
Every good hap to you, that chances here:
Give me thy hand: 'tis late: farewell; good night.

ROM. But that a joy past joy calls out on me,
It were a grief so brief to part with thee:
Farewell." [*Exeunt.*

HERE the stage immortalizes all the poesy of night in the delirium of passion. Had Shakspeare written but this scene, he would still be Shakspeare!—the struggle between life and death.

The stage represents the bed-room of Juliet, viewed in the morning twilight. Romeo is about to depart: Juliet retains him.

"JUL. Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear:
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree:
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

ROM. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops;
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

JUL. Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
It is some meteor, that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.

ROM. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say, yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay, than will to go:—
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.—
How is't, my soul? let's talk, it is not day.

JUL. It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away;
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords, and unpleasing sharps.
Some say, the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so, for she divideth us;
Some say, the lark and loathed toad change eyes;
O, how I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence, with hunt's-up to the day.
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

ROM. More light and light?—more dark and dark our woes.

Enter Nurse.

NURSE. Madam.

JUL. Nurse?

NURSE. Your lady mother's coming to your chamber;
The day is broke; be wary, look about. [*Exit Nurse.*

JUL. Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

ROM. Farewell! farewell! one kiss, and I'll descend. (*Romeo descends.*)

JUL. Art thou gone so? my love! my lord! my friend!
I must hear from thee every day i' the hour,
For in a minute there are many days:
O! by this count I shall be much in years,
Ere I again behold my Romeo.

ROM. Farewell! I will omit no opportunity
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

JUL. O, think'st thou, we shall ever meet again?

ROM. I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

JUL. O God! I have an ill-divining soul,
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb:
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

ROM. And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu! adieu!
[*Exit Romeo.*

JUL. O fortune, fortune! all men call thee fickle:
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him,
That is renown'd for faith? Be fickle, fortune;
For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long,
But send him back.

LA. CAP. (*within*). Ho, daughter! are you up?

JUL. Who is't that calls? is it my lady mother?
Is she not down so late, or up so early?
What unaccustom'd cause procures her hither?"

HER father and her mother enter and inform her of their resolve to marry her to Paris on the following Thursday. She resists, they insist, chide, and threaten. The nurse, with the low and time-serving sentiments which pertain to her condition, changes sides, and urges her to prefer the handsome and noble Paris to the eternally absent husband whom she just now served.

Juliet in her indignation severely apostrophizes her nurse, and hastens to the cell of Father Laurence. She shows him the dagger with which she has resolved to stab herself if he do not rescue her from the sacrilegious union with Paris which her father imposes on her.

"Hold, daughter," says the friar, terrified by her despair;

"I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desperate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent,
If, rather than to marry county Paris,
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself;
Then is it likely, thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,
That cop'st with death himself to scape from it;
And, if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

JUL. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of yonder tower;
Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears;
Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house,
O'er-covered quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks, and yellow chapless skulls;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud;
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble;
And I will do it without fear or doubt,
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love.

FRI. Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent
To marry Paris: Wednesday is to-morrow;
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone,
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber;
Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off:
When, presently through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humour, which shall seize
Each vital spirit; for no pulse shall keep
His natural progress, but surcease to beat:
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
To paley ashes; thy eyes' windows fall,
Like death, when he shuts up the day of life;
Each part, deprived of supple government,
Shall stiff, and stark, and cold, appear like death:
And in this borrow'd likeness of shrunk death

Thou shalt remain full two and forty hours,
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead:
Then (as the manner of our country is),
In thy best robes uncover'd on the bier,
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault,
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift;
And hither shall he come: and he and I
Will watch thy waking, and that very night
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
And this shall free thee from this present shame:
If no unconstant toy, nor womanish fear,
Abate thy valour in the acting it.

JUL. Give me, O give me! tell me not of fear.

FRI. Hold; get you gone, be strong and prosperous
In this resolve: I'll send a friar with speed
To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

JUL. Love, give me strength! and strength shall help afford.
Farewell, dear father!" [*Exeunt.*

The intrepid young girl remains at home, retires to bed, and takes out the phial . . . A suspicion crosses her mind:

"What if it be poison, which the friar
Subtly have minister'd to have me dead;
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,
Because he married me before to Romeo.

I fear it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man:
I will not entertain so bad a thought.
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place,—
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
Where, for these many hundred years, the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd;
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies fest'ring in his shroud: where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort;—
Alack, alack! is it not like, that I,
So early waking,—what with loathsome smells;
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad;—
O! if I wake shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears?
And madly play with my forefathers' joints?
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
O, look! methinks, I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo, that did split his body
Upon a rapier's point:—Stay, Tybalt, stay!—

Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee."

(*She throws herself upon her bed, behind a curtain.*)

MORNING breaks. They enter to awaken her, they find her dead. Then there are tears and lamentations! Old Capulet himself gives way to grief.

"Death lies on her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field!"

"Death is my son-in-law," says he to Paris, when the latter is informed of their loss.

"Death is my heir;
My daughter he hath wedded! I will die
And leave him all; life leaving, all is death's."

And the mother exclaims amidst her sobs:

"But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight!"

"—O woful, woful, woful day!" cries the nurse,
"Most lamentable day! most woful day!"

The FRIAR *enters.*

"Peace, for shame," says he,

"Heaven and yourself
Had part in this fair maid; now Heaven hath all,
And all the better is it for the maid:
Your part in her you could not keep from death;
But Heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
The most you sought was—her promotion;
For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced;
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced,

Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
O, in this love, you love your child so ill,
That you run mad, seeing that she is well:
She's not well married, that lives married long;
But she's best married, that dies married young.
Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,
In all her best array bear her to church:
For though fond nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment."

These lamentations of despair, and this pious resignation, are interrupted by a scene, out of place and scandalously comic, between the servant of the house and some musicians. The object, in which it fails, is evidently to show the indifference of strangers to the afflictions of the great. But here, all nature should grieve at the aspect of a catastrophe to life, to youth, to beauty, and to love. Every one should be moved by it, else tragedy no longer exists, and there is no longer a sympathetic human nature. And thus, this scene inspires one with horror, and is by no means really comic. This is one of those defects of taste which we must not attribute to Shakspeare, but to the depraved populace whose favour he was forced to conciliate even by disgraceful means.

Let us pity great men!

Romeo, as he ascends to his solitary chamber, experiences that happy presentiment which those who die happy give to survivors ignorant of their fate, as a foretaste of their approaching reunion:—

"My dreams presage some joyful news at hand,
My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne."

Enter a messenger from Verona.

"How fares my Juliet?" he inquires;
"For nothing can be ill if she be well!"

"Then she is well," replies the messenger; "for
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives."

"Is it even so?" exclaims Romeo, starting from his seat, "then I defy you, stars! Get me ink and paper, and hire post-horses! I will hence to-night!"

The messenger obeys and withdraws. Romeo issues forth with the purpose of purchasing poison.

"Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.
Let's see for means:—O mischief, thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
I do remember an apothecary,—
And hereabouts he dwells,—whom late I noted
In tatter'd weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples; meagre were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuff'd, and other skins
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes,
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses,
Were thinly scatter'd, to make up a show.
Noting this penury, to myself I said—
An if a man did need a poison now,

Whose sale is present death in Mantua,
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.
O, this same thought did but fore-run my need;
And this same needy man must sell it me.
As I remember, this should be the house:
Being holyday, the beggar's shop is shut.—
What, ho! apothecary!"

The apothecary yields to misery, and sells death to him, in spite of the punishment for so doing threatened by law.

"Come, cordial," exclaims Romeo as he places in his bosom this liberator, this lovers' hemlock; "come to Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee!"

Whilst he is hastening towards Verona, an explanation takes place in the cell of Father Laurence. The friar whom the latter had commissioned to make known to Romeo the subterfuge of the feigned death of Juliet, returns to announce that, having been detained by an accident, he was unable to accomplish his mission.

In the mean while, Paris, accompanied by his page, comes, in his pious grief, secretly to strew flowers on the tomb of his betrothed. Friar Laurence, anxious as to the awakening of Juliet from the heavy slumber produced by the drug, also proceeds thither, in order to be present at her resurrection, and, in the absence of Romeo, to take her to his cell, until he can send her next day to her lover.

Romeo at length arrives in disguise, and borrows from his page a pickaxe for the purpose of opening

the sepulchre, that, when dying, he might lie beside his dead love. Paris, in astonishment, recognizes him as the murderer of Tybalt; he accosts him with injurious terms. Romeo feels pity for him; but at length slays him, because Paris wishes to oppose his sacrilege.

"— O, I am slain," exclaims Paris as he falls. "If thou be merciful, open the tomb, lay me with Juliet."

"Rom. In faith, I will :—Let me peruse this face:—
Mercutio's kinsman, noble county Paris !—
What said my man, when my betossed soul
Did not attend him as we rode ? I think,
He told me, Paris should have married Juliet !
Said he not so ? or did I dream it so ?
Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
To think it was so ?—O, give me thy hand,
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book !
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave.—
A grave ? O no; a lantern, slaughter'd youth,
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence full of light.
Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd.
(*Laying Paris in the Monument.*)
How oft, when men are at the point of death,
Have they been merry ? which their keepers call
A lightning before death: O, how may I
Call this a lightning ?—O, my love ! my wife !
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet

Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.—
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
O, what more favour can I do to thee,
Than with that hand, that cut thy youth in twain,
To sunder his, that was thine enemy?
Forgive me, cousin?—Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous;
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that, I will still stay with thee;
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again: here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest;
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh.—Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death:—
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!
Here's to my love! (*Drinks.*) O, true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick.—Thus with a kiss I die. (*Dies.*)

Enter, at the other end of the churchyard, Friar LAURENCE, *with a lantern, crow, and spade.*

FRI. Saint Francis be my speed! how oft to-night
Have my old feet stumbled at graves!—Who's there?

Who is it that consorts so late the dead?

BAL. Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

FRI. Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,
What torch is yond', that vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern
It burneth in the Capel's monument.

BAL. It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,
One that you love.

FRI. Who is it?

BAL. Romeo.

FRI. How long hath he been there?

BAL. Full half an hour.

FRI. Go with me to the vault.

BAL. I dare not, sir:
My master knows not but I am gone hence;
And fearfully did menace me with death,
If I did stay to look on his intents.

FRI. Stay then, I'll go alone:—Fear comes upon me:
O, much I fear some ill unlucky thing.

BAL. As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,
I dreamt my master and another fought,
And that my master slew him.

FRI. Romeo!— (*Advances.*)
Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?
What mean these masterless and gory swords
To lie discolour'd by this place of peace?
(*Enters the monument.*)
Romeo! O pale!—Who else? what, Paris too?

And steep'd in blood?—Ah, what an unkind hour
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!
The lady stirs. (*Juliet wakes and stirs.*)

JUL. O comfortable friar, where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be,
And there I am:—Where is my Romeo?
(*Noise within.*)

FRI. I hear some noise.—Lady, come from that nest
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep;
A greater power than we can contradict
Hath thwarted our intents; come, come away:
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;
And Paris too; come, I'll dispose of thee
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns:
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;
Come, go, good Juliet,—(*Noise again.*) I dare stay no longer. [*Exit.*

JUL. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.—
What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's hand?
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end:—
O churl! drink all; and leave no friendly drop,
To help me after?—I will kiss thy lips:
Haply, some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative. (*Kisses him.*)
Thy lips are warm?

1 WATCH. (*within*). Lead, boy:—Which way?

JUL. Yea, noise?—then I'll be brief.—O happy dagger! (*Snatching Romeo's dagger.*)
This is thy sheath (*stabs herself*); there rust, and let me die. (*Falls on Romeo's body, and dies.*)

Enter Watch with the Page of Paris.

PAGE. This is the place; there, where the torch doth burn.

1 WATCH. The ground is bloody: Search about the churchyard:
Go, some of you, whoe'er you find, attach.
[*Exeunt some.*
Pitiful sight! here lies the county slain;—
And Juliet bleeding; warm, and newly dead,
Who here hath lain these two days buried.—
Go, tell the prince,—run to the Capulets,—
Raise up the Montagues,—some others search;—
[*Exeunt other Watchmen.*
We see the ground whereon these woes do lie;
But the true ground of all these piteous woes,
We cannot without circumstance descry.

Enter some of the Watch, with BALTHAZAR.

2 WATCH. Here's Romeo's man, we found him in the churchyard.

1 WATCH. Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

Enter another Watchman, with Friar LAURENCE.

3 WATCH. Here is a friar that trembles, sighs, and weeps:
We took this mattock and this spade from him,
As he was coming from this churchyard side.

1 WATCH. A great suspicion: Stay the friar too.

Enter the Prince and Attendants.

PRINCE. What misadventure is so early up,
That calls our person from our morning's rest?

Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, *and others.*

CAP. What should it be, that they so shriek abroad?

LA. CAP. The people in the street cry—Romeo,
Some—Juliet, and some—Paris; and all run,
With open outcry, toward our monument.

PRINCE. What fear is this, which startles in our ears?

1 WATCH. Sovereign, here lies the county Paris slain;
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,
Warm and new kill'd.

PRINCE. Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.

1 WATCH. Here is a friar, and slaughter'd Romeo's man;
With instruments upon them, fit to open
These dead men's tombs.

CAP. O heavens!—O wife! look how our daughter bleeds!
This dagger hath mista'en,—for, lo! his house
Is empty on the back of Montague,—
And is mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom.

LA. CAP. O me! this sight of death is as a bell,
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

Enter MONTAGUE, *and others.*

PRINCE. Come, Montague; for thou art early up,

To see thy son and heir more early down.

MON. Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night;
Grief of my son's exile hath stopp'd her breath:
What farther wo conspires against mine age?

PRINCE. Look, and thou shalt see.

MON. O thou untaught! what manners is in this,
To press before thy father to a grave.

PRINCE. Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,
Till we can clear these ambiguities,
And know their spring, their head, their true descent;
And then will I be general of your woes,
And lead you even to death: Meantime forbear,
And let mischance be slave to patience.—
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

FRI. I am the greatest, able to do least,
Yet most suspected, as the time and place
Doth make against me, of this direful murder;
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
Myself condemned and myself accused.

PRINCE. Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

FRI. I will be brief, for my short date of breath
Is not so long as is a tedious tale.
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet,
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife:
I married them; and their stolen marriage day
Was Tybalt's dooms-day, whose untimely death
Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from this city;
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.
You—to remove that siege of grief from her,—
Betroth'd, and would have married her perforce,

To county Paris:—Then comes she to me;
And, with wild looks, bid me devise some means
To rid her from this second marriage,
Or, in my cell there would she kill herself.
Then gave I her, so tutor'd by my art,
A sleeping potion; which so took effect
As I intended, for it wrought on her
The form of death: meantime I writ to Romeo,
That he should hither come as this dire night,
To help to take her from her borrow'd grave,
Being the time the potion's force should cease.
But he which bore my letter, friar John,
Was staid by accident; and yesternight
Return'd my letter back: Then all alone,
At the prefixed hour of her waking,
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;
Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo:
But, when I came (some minute ere the time
Of her awakening), here untimely lay
The noble Paris, and true Romeo, dead.
She wakes; and I entreated her come forth,
And bear this work of Heaven with patience:
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb;
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,
But (as it seems), did violence on herself.
All this I know; and to the marriage
Her nurse is privy: And if aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrificed, some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.

PRINCE. We still have known thee for a holy man.—
Where's Romeo's man? what can he say in this?

BAL. I brought my master news of Juliet's death;
And then in post he came from Mantua,
To this same place, to this same monument.
This letter he early bid me give his father;
And threatened me with death, going in the vault,
If I departed not, and left him there.

PRINCE. Give me the letter, I will look on it.—
Where is the county's page, that raised the watch?
Sirrah, what made your master in this place?

PAGE. He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave;
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did:
Anon comes one with light to ope the tomb;
And, by and by, my master drew on him;
And then I ran away to call the watch.

PRINCE. This letter doth make good the friar's words,
Their course of love, the tidings of her death:
And here he writes—that he did buy a poison
Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.—
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!—
See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That Heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I, for winking at your discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen: all are punish'd.

CAP. O brother Montague, give me thy hand:
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more

Can I demand.

MON. But I can give thee more:
For I will raise her statue in pure gold;
That, while Verona by that name is known,
There shall no figure at such rate be set,
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

CAP. As rich shall Romeo by his lady lie;
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

PRINCE. A gloomy peace this morning with it brings;
The sun for sorrow, will not show his head:
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
Some shall be pardon'd and some punished:
For never was a story of more wo,
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo. [*Exeunt.*

SUCH is this first great dramatic work of Shakspeare.

In it there is no invention, since it is the literal rendering of the Italian novel given at the commencement.

The taste is vitiated, since the most scandalous obscenity takes the place of virgin modesty, a virtue in style as well as in love.

The style is in great measure depraved by the Italian affectation of this period, according to which an author aims at wit instead of the simple and truthful exhibition of sentiment in the positions where he places his personages. The pathos is weakened by

a false and quintessenced refinement in expression. These are the defects of Shakspeare in this play.

But, admitting this to be superabundantly proved by those portions of the work upon which we have thrown the veil of omission, the beauties reveal a great genius, a splendid imagination, and a pathetic heart, master of other hearts.

The scene of the wedding of the two lovers, and that admirable invention of the nightingale awakening the young bride, the uncertainty which the bird awakens in the soul of Juliet, whether it be the evening song announcing a long night of delight, or the morning song necessitating separation or death; this amorous dispute between the two lovers as to whether it was not the matinal lark instead of the nocturnal songster, as to the supreme minutes which were denied to their love, or during which their felicity was to be prolonged, an invention which is wholly Shakspeare's, and which none but the poet could create, is worth a whole tragedy. It is a complete poem, it is the heart sounded to its very mysteries, and it is nature associated to the happiness of the lovers by the most joyous and the most melancholic analogy of the summer nights beneath the sky of southern climes; it is the same note of the nightingale, at even or in the morning twilight, giving to the lovers the signal of joy or the terrors of death. Thus, *it is the nightingale* of Juliet, or *it is the lark* of Romeo, has in all countries become proverbial for anxious love. Poetry can go no further, and imagination can

find no parable more divinely expressed in any language.

Observe how the poet, entirely left to his own inspiration, here becomes simple and sober in his expressions, through the very strength and truth of the sentiment. All the pathos is centred in these two words: *it is the nightingale,* or *it is the lark;* and then in that terrible cry of Juliet when, after having denied it, she is forced to recognize the latter:

"It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows!"

To hear such a dialogue in a play, one would pass over an ocean of *concetti* and cold declamations. The force of the situation carries all away, one cannot resist that anxiety which wholly seizes upon the spectator; and youthful passion gives its fire to everything. Shakspeare writes in words of flame the gloomy *dénouement* at the tomb of the Capulets. That double mistake so well brought about and too late discovered; that poison quaffed by Romeo that he might not survive her whom he believed dead; that stab with a dagger which Juliet gives herself that she may not awake in a world where her lover no longer exists; that innocently-culpable monk who arrives too late to prevent this double suicide; all these prove that if the play, being invented in the romance, cannot here be said to be beautifully invented, it is at least admirably chosen by Shakspeare to empassion an auditory and to express the first amongst the innocent passions of humanity, namely, love!

And thus there is in the play no crime, no vice to contrast with the two young lovers. They suffice to themselves and they suffice to the spectator. Everything around them is innocent and good, except the blind and deaf fatality which sets a trap for them and urges them towards it. The father, the mother, the friends, the monk, the suitor Paris himself, everything combines to love and serve them, and yet they love, they are united, and they die! . . . Fate draws them to each other, separates them, and unites them in the hymen of a violent death.* A tender pity for these two children, the victims of the very friendship of the monk who wishes to save them, is the only sentiment which results from the spectacle of this beautiful drama; a tear without bitterness flows from every eye. It is the tragedy of innocence; it is the tragedy of nature; but it is not the tragedy of art. Voltaire has brutally said of Shakspeare, *a drunken savage*: it is not so, but he was a man of uncultured and native genius, who, in the chastened ordering of his plays, as little resembles Æschylus, Euripides, Corneille, Racine, or Voltaire himself, as the virgin forest on the banks of the Mississippi resembles the Parthenon of Athens! Yet the Parthenon is of marble; it is admired, but it does not live; there is no sap circulating in the stony veins of its statues, whilst the virgin forest grows, lives with exuberant life, and is renewed from century to century! This is Shakspeare's characteristic; he is full of defects, but also full of passion; he lives, and he will live an eternal life.

Let us look at his principal master-work, and thus explain to ourselves the enthusiasm with which this poor holder of horses at the door of a theatre inspires the most cultivated nation of the universe.

HAMLET.

THIS is how M. François-Victor Hugo, the son of the great poet, presents to us the first narrative of the tragical adventure whence proceeded Hamlet.

It is known that Shakspeare, who was then but 21 years of age, was living at his father's house, at Stratford-on-the-Avon, with his wife, who was somewhat older than himself, and the young children she had borne him.

Read this in the first place; it is the *tableau:*

"We can never fully know how painful was this first struggle of genius with want, nor what a source of bitterness it was to this great mind. I can imagine that the young man must have suffered cruelly from those intellectual privations which poverty imposed upon him. When the pedler, newly arrived at Stratford from London, passed the humble abode in Henley Street, how heart-breaking to let him go without making one purchase! Often must Will have sighed to see him thus turn the corner of the street. Then might he have wished for riches, and have envied Sir

Thomas Lucy, that imbecile of a knight who spent his trite existence in a magnificent château. But Will, however narrow may have been his circumstances, was not a man to resist the temptation for ever. On Christmas eve, for instance, at the approach of that joyous festival, which is the *jour de l'an* of the English, the pedler did not fail to pay a visit to the town, and to pass in front of the young poet's abode. Then Will could no longer resist committing for once an extravagance; he would open his door and call in the pedler. The latter entered, opened his pack, and spread out before the eager eyes of Shakspeare all the riches imported from the great city. But whar attracted the attention of Will was neither the glass trinkets, nor the false jewelry, the lace, silks, knicknacks, and gewgaws; it was that little old book, bound in parchment and with gilt edges, thrown negligently in a corner of the box. Will would pick up the volume, turn over the pages, and, if his curiosity were aroused, would inquire its price. Then, although the price was always very high, he would say to himself that it was Christmas-time, that it was necessary to make his wife a present, and that Anne would certainly prefer this book to a ribbon. Then he would make up his mind, pay the pedler his money, and triumphantly bear away his purchase.

"The appearance of a new book must have been quite an event in Shakspeare's house, amidst that monotonous country existence in which emotions are so rare. The time for reading it was announced beforehand: it was doubtless in the evening, for

during the day every one was engaged, and Will was helping in the business of the shop. Thus in the evening the whole family gathered together, around the same log, and lighted by the same candle, for it was necessary to economize. Every seat was brought into requisition and drawn up as closely as possible to the fire, for the winter was severe and the weather was already very cold. Can you see them now, all the members of the august family drawn up in a circle around that humble hearth? By the fireside, to the right, that grey-headed man seated upon the high chair is the father of William, Mr John Shakspeare, by trade butcher, currier, glover, and dealer in wool, who at one time was elected by his fellow-townsmen bailiff of the body corporate of the good town of Stratford. Facing him, to the left of the fireplace, and seated in the only arm-chair in the house, that respectable matron who is knitting is the mother of William, Mrs Shakspeare, whose maiden name is Mary Arden, and who, if you please, is a descendant of a certain valet of King Henry VII. By her side, upon that low chair, that young woman suckling her baby is William's wife, Miss Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer at Shottery, a humble village in the neighbourhood. Near her, upon a stool, that young man with the high forehead, aquiline nose, and sparkling eye, is he! he, the yet unknown author of *Othello* and of *Macbeth!* he, the future prince of poets, William Shakspeare! Lastly, upon the bench drawn up to his father's chair, that youth of 17 is Gilbert, William's younger brother. But where, then, are the others?

Will has, besides, a little sister and two little brothers. Where is Jane? where is Richard? where is Edmond? where can these children have hidden? Well! if you look carefully, you will find them beneath the chimney-piece itself, crouching in the two niches to the right and to the left of the fire-place.

"Thus the party is complete, the door closed, the window fastened up. There is no reason why the reading should not begin. This reading is to be aloud, and it is Gilbert who undertakes it, for Gilbert has a great taste for declamation, and a great wish to become a comedian. The little ones are enjoined to be good and to make no noise. Gilbert takes up the book that Will has just purchased: it is a collection of tragical stories, translated from the French. Gilbert has only to choose from amongst these stories, all written by the famous chronicler Belleforest. He opens the volume at random, and commences to read in a solemn tone."

Now this is the purport of what he reads from this translation of the popular histories of Belleforest:—

Rovigne reigned over the north of Europe; he bestowed the hand of his daughter Geruthe upon Lord Rewill, who had valiantly fought for him in Jutland. Fengor, the brother of Hordrevenill, jealous of the glory and happiness of the latter, assassinated him amidst a banquet. He married the widow Geruthe. Geruthe had a son by Hardenwill; this son was Hamlet; Hamlet feigned madness in order to escape the snares of his father-in-law. Queen Heruthe affected

to pity and despise him. From the time of Brutus, this is the ordinary artifice of those who have a mortal wrong to avenge, and who conceal a great purpose under a feigned incapacity. Fengor caused to be brought to him Ophelia, who had loved Hamlet from early childhood; but Hamlet assumed towards her an air of disdain. This coldness convinced Fengor that Hamlet was really out of his mind. Wishing, however, to test him still further, he caused Hamlet to be closeted with his mother Geruthe during a feigned journey on the part of Fengor, who had concealed a spy within the chamber, thinking that, within this privacy, the young man might betray his secret by acknowledging to his mother that he knew who was his father's assassin, and was preparing to avenge his murder. But Hamlet continued to imitate the action of a fowl clapping its wings, and suddenly pouncing upon the spy, as though by a convulsive movement, he slew him, and, dragging him from the chamber by a secret passage which led to the poultry-yard, threw him to be devoured by the pigs belonging to the palace. He then revealed his intelligence in the deserved reproaches he addressed to his mother. The latter excused herself on the grounds of her weakness, and the complicity of the court, by which she was constrained to act against her own will; and implored Hamlet to continue to feign madness.

Fengor, on his return to the palace, is surprised at not finding his spy, whose death arouses his suspicions. He sends away Hamlet to England; and whilst he is rejoicing with his nobles at the death of Hamlet, a

false report of which had been spread in Denmark, the latter, who had married the English princess, and was possessed of the treasure forming her dowry, arrives unexpectedly at the palace, finds the accomplices of Fengor asleep, after their drunken revelry, upon the floor, unfastens the tapestry of the festive hall, causes it to fall upon the guests, whom he nails beneath this funeral pall, and then pierces them with his sword and sets fire to the hall. He then proceeded to the royal chamber, where the tyrant was reposing upon his couch, and, before striking him, addresses to him the most terrible reproaches for his crime. The tyrant springs from his couch in order to slay Hamlet, and reaches his sword, which was suspended at the head of his bed; but the queen Geruthe had fastened the hilt to the scabbard, and the tyrant falls beneath the blows of Hamlet.

"Go," says he, "to the regions below, and tell my father Hardenwill that his son has slain thee to avenge him!"

He then threw off his simulated madness and reigned as a great king, wisely and prudently, over the north. Geruthe survived, living in the palace betwixt the shadows of her two husbands, slain, one by crime, the other by filial piety.

Here is the germ of Hamlet, found by Shakspeare in a French legend, as was that of Romeo and Juliet in an Italian romance.

Shakspeare acknowledges that, at the age of 21, which he had attained when this adventure appeared in England, it was the pressure of extreme want that

induced him to write. Genius itself needs this sanguinary goad; glory is the daughter of need.

His success was great, but not sufficient to bestow upon the young poet a competency, liberty, or leisure with his family. He continued to play comic parts, with moderate success, at the London theatre, amidst the troubles of a life of anxiety. A few years afterwards, he remodelled *Hamlet* with greater maturity and less success. The first Hamlet made its author's fortune, and, to quote the expression of M. François-Victor Hugo, founded the English drama, as the *Cid* of Corneille founded the French drama.

But let us pass over these secondary considerations, and, with the text in our hands, examine the play itself. Yet first a word from the great German poet Goethe upon Hamlet. One may see in this word how Goethe, superior to Shakspeare in poesy, his equal in dramatic power, his superior in theatric philosophy, had been struck by the plot of his master's drama.

"The more I studied *Hamlet*," says Goethe, "the more difficult I found it to form a general idea of it as a whole. I lost myself in the by-paths, and I long wandered in vain. At length, however, I conceived the idea of attaining the end I had in view by a way which was entirely new.

"I began to seek for every indication of Hamlet's character, in order that I might see him as he was before his father's death. I endeavoured to distinguish all that was independent of this painful event, and of the painful events which followed it, and to

divine what this young man would in all probability have been if nothing similar had happened.

"Tender and of a noble stock, this young flower had grown under the immediate influence of majesty: the idea of moral rectitude united with the idea of his princely elevation, the sentiment of good ennobled by the consciousness of high birth, had simultaneously become developed within him. He was a prince, and was born to be one, and he desired to reign in order that good men might be virtuous without obstacle. Of agreeable manners, polite by nature, courteous from his heart, he should have been the model of youth and the delight of the world.

"Without any dominating passion, the love he cherished for Ophelia was a secret presentiment of the tenderest impulses. His ardour for chivalvous exercises was not entirely natural to him; it was necessary that it should be excited and inflamed by praise accorded to others and by the desire to surpass them. Pure in feeling, he could quickly recognize honesty of character, and he knew how to appreciate that peaceful confidence which is enjoyed by a sincere heart in commune with that of a friend. Up to a certain point, he had learned to honour what is good and beautiful in art and science; mediocrity or vulgarity were offensive to him, and if hatred could take root within his soul, it was only to cause him justly to contemn the false and fickle creatures that crawl about a court, and to laugh at them with easy raillery. In temperament he was calm, in conduct frank and open, neither inclined towards idleness nor too strongly desirous of activity.

His gaiety was that of the intellect rather than of the heart; he was a good companion, complaisant, courteous, discreet, capable of forgetting and forgiving an injury, yet incapable of ever uniting with those who overstep the limits of justice, of truth, of decency.

"Imagine to yourself a prince such as I have described; his father suddenly dies. Ambition and the love of power are not the passions that inspire him. He would have been satisfied to remain the son of a king; but now for the first time he is forced to realize the distance which separates a sovereign from a subject. The crown was not hereditary, yet a longer occupation of the throne by the father would have strengthened the claim of an only son, and have assured his hopes of succession. Instead of this, he sees himself excluded by his uncle, and, in spite of brilliant promises, very probably for ever. Now he is ruined, disgraced, a stranger upon the very scene which from his youth he looked upon as his hereditary domain. His character here takes its first tinge of melancholy. He feels that now he is no greater, that he is less, than a simple nobleman; he presents himself as everybody's servitor, he is no longer courteous and protecting, he is needy and degraded.

"He remembers his past condition as a dream that has flown. It is in vain that his uncle endeavours to console him, to exhibit to him his position under another aspect. He can no longer divest himself of the feeling of his nothingness.

"The second blow that falls upon him wounds and

humiliates him yet more deeply. When his father died, the tender and faithful son had still left to him a mother. He hoped to live in her company to revere the memory of the hero who was no more; but he loses his mother also, and it is something worse than death that takes her from him; the tutelary image of his parents that a child loves to conjure, no longer exists. No refuge in the thought of the dead father, no tie between him and the living mother. She also is a woman, and her name is Frailty.

"Then, for the first time, he feels himself an orphan, and there is to him no joy in this life that can compensate for what he has lost. Although naturally neither pensive nor melancholy, misery and sadness have become to him an overwhelming necessity.

"Imagine to yourself this young man, this son of a king, living under your eyes; imagine to yourself his position, and then mark him when he learns that the spectre of his father appears; be at his side that sinister night when the venerable phantom glides before him. A shudder of horror thrills through his limbs; he addresses the mysterious shade, he sees it beckon to him, he follows and listens to it. The terrible voice which accuses his uncle resounds in his ear; it urges him on to vengeance by the heart-rending prayer: 'Remember me!'

"And when the spectre has vanished, whom have we before us? a young hero thirsting for vengeance? a legitimate prince happy to be called upon to punish the usurper? No! trouble and surprise have seized upon the solitary young man; he grows bitter against

the villains who smile upon him, he swears not to forget the ghost, and he concludes by this significant exclamation:

'The time is out of joint,—O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right!'

"In these words, it appears to me, is to be found the key to the whole conduct of Hamlet. It is clear to me that Shakspeare wished to depict to us a mind upon which devolves a great action, and which is incapable of accomplishing it. An oak is planted in a vase which should contain but charming flowers; the roots spread, and the vase is shattered.

"It is evident that the idea of Shakspeare is that of a religious fatality. 'There is,' says he in some part of the drama, 'a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all!'"

Once more let us read the play.

THE sentinels who watch around the palace converse familiarly amongst themselves of an apparition which had frighted them on the preceding night.

"It was only last night,—
When yon same star, that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus, and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

ANOTHER SEN. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again.

ANOTHER SOL. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

ANOTHER SOL. Speak to it, Horatio.

HOR. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!"

The spectre, offended by the interrogation, glides silently away.

The soldiers continue to discuss this prodigy, and a clear and complete exposition of the drama is naturally given in their conversation. The prodigy adds its authority and its presentiment to this *tableau*. Never was ghost more called for, or a greater proclaimer of mystery in an event. It is the phantom of a people's conscience stirred by a great remorse. One may expect anything after this warning from above. This ghost, boldly brought forward in the first scene of the drama, bears witness to the genius of Shakspeare.

The phantom returns; Horatio questions it a second time; it again turns and glides away.

"I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein

This present object made probation.

MAR. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes,
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

HOR. Break we our watch up; and by my advice
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

MAR. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most convenient."

HERE follows an important scene, in which appear the king, the treacherous assassin of the father of Hamlet; the queen, partly guilty and partly led away; Hamlet, the presumed madman; Laertes, the courtier, brother to Ophelia, the lady secretly beloved by Hamlet; and ambassadors taking their leave prior to their departure for France.

After the customary ceremonies, the guilty king turns with feigned kindness towards young Hamlet, and addresses to him a friendly reproach upon his melancholy humour.

"'I pray thee,' says he to him, 'stay with us: go not to Wittenberg.'

HAM. My lord, 'tis not alone my inky cloak,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly: These, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within, which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father;
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound
In filial obligation, for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: But to persevere
In obstinate condolement, is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief:
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven;
A heart unfortified, or mind impatient;
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what, we know, must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe.

QUEEN. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
I pray thee, stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.
HAM. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.
KING. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.
[*Exeunt all except Hamlet.*
HAM. O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two;
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
That he might not let e'en the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on't:—Frailty, thy name is woman;

A little month; or e'er those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears;—why she, even she,—
O heaven! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer,—married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules: Within a month;
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married;—O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to, good;
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

Enter HORATIO, *and* MARCELLUS.

HOR. Hail to your lordship!

HAM. I am glad to see you well:
Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

HOR. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

HAM. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—
Marcellus?

MAR. My good lord,—

HAM. I am very glad to see you; good even, sir,
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

HOR. A truant disposition, good my lord.

HAM. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report

Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

HOR. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

HAM. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think, it was to see my mother's wedding.

HOR. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

HAM. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
'Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!—
My father,—Methinks, I see my father.

HOR. Where,
My lord?

HAM. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

HOR. I saw him once, he was a goodly king.

HAM. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

HOR. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

HAM. Saw! who?

HOR. My lord, the king your father.

HAM. The king my father!

HOR. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear; till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen
This marvel to you.

HAM. For God's love, let me hear.

HOR. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,

In the dead waist and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point, exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and, with a solemn march,
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

HAM. But where was this?

MAR. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

HAM. Did you not speak to it?

HOR. My lord, I did;
But answer made it none: yet once, methought,
It lifted up its head, and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak:
But, even then, the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

HAM. 'Tis very strange.

HOR. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty,
To let you know of it.

HAM. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.

Hold you the watch to-night?

ALL. We do, my lord.

HAM. Arm'd, say you?

ALL. Arm'd, my lord.

HAM. From top to toe?

ALL. My lord, from head to foot.

HAM. Then saw you not
His face?

HOR. O, yes, my lord: he wore his beaver up.

HAM. What, look'd he frowningly?

HOR. A countenance more
In sorrow than in anger.

HAM. Pale or red?

HOR. Nay, very pale.

HAM. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

HOR. Most constantly.

HAM. I would I had been there.

HOR. It would have much amaz'd you.

HAM. Very like.
Very like. Stay'd it long?

HOR. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

MAR. and BER. Longer, longer.

HOR. Not when I saw it.

HAM. His beard was grizzled? no?

HOR. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

HAM. I will watch to-night;
Perchance, 'twill walk again.

HOR. I warrant you, it will.

HAM. If it assume my noble father's person,

I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still:
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves: So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

ALL. Our duty to your honour.

HAM. Your loves, as mine to you; Farewell.

[*Exeunt Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: 'would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit.*

Scene III.—*A Room in Polonius's House.*

Enter LAERTES *and* OPHELIA.

LAER. My necessaries are embark'd; farewell:

* * * * * * * *

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes:
The canker galls the infants of the spring,

Too oft before their buttons be disclosed;
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth,
Contagious blastments are most imminent,
Be wary then: best safety lies in fear;
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

OPH. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart: But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own read.

LAER. O fear me not.
I stay too long:—But here my father comes.

Enter POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

POL. Yet here, Laertes? aboard, aboard, for shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are staid for: There,—my blessing with you:
(*Laying his hand on Laertes' head*).
And these few precepts in thy memory
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,

Bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France, of the best rank and station,
Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all,—To thine ownself be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

LAER. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

POL. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

LAER. Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.

OPH. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

LAER. Farewell. [*Exit.*

POL. What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

OPH. So please you, something touching the lord Hamlet.

POL. Marry, well bethought;
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:
If it be so (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution), I must tell you,

You do not understand yourself so clearly,
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour:
What is between you? give me up the truth.

OPH. He hath, my lord, of late, made many tenders
Of his affection for me.

POL. Affection? puh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

OPH. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

POL. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay.
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly:
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wronging it thus), you'll tender me a fool.

OPH. My lord, he hath importuned me with love,
In honourable fashion.

POL. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

OPH. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

POL. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows; these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat,—extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a making,—
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate,
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, That he is young;
And with a larger tether may he walk,

Than may be given you: In few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers
Not of that die which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds,
The better to beguile. This is for all,—
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

OPH. I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—HAMLET, *with* HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS, *who point out to him his father's ghost.*

HOR. Look, my lord, it comes!

HAM. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked, or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee; I'll call thee, Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me:
Let me not burst in ignorance! but tell,
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws
To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,

So horribly to shake our disposition,
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

HOR. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

MAR. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

HOR. No, by no means.

HAM. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

HOR. Do not, my lord.

HAM. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again, ;—I'll follow it.

HOR. What, if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base into the sea?
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,
And draw you into madness? think of it:
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea,
And hears it roar beneath.

HAM. It waves me still:
Go on, I'll follow thee.

MAR. You shall not go, my lord.

HAM. Hold off your hands.
HOR. Be ruled, you shall not go.
HAM. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.—(*Ghost beckons.*)
Still am I call'd;—unhand me, gentlemen;—
(*Breaking from them.*)
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me:—
I say, away:—Go on, I'll follow thee.
[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*
HOR. He waxes desperate with imagination.
MAR. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.
HOR. Have after:—To what issue will this come?
MAR. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
HOR. Heaven will direct it.
MAR. Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Another part of the Platform.*

Re-enter the GHOST *and* HAMLET.

HAM. Whither wilt thou lead me? speak, I'll go no farther.
GHOST. Mark me.
HAM. I will.
GHOST. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.
HAM. Alas, poor ghost!
GHOST. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.
HAM. Speak, I am bound to hear.

GHOST. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAM. What?

GHOST. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood:—List, list, O list!—
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,—

HAM. O heaven!

GHOST. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAM. Murder?

GHOST. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAM. Haste me to know it; that I, with wings as swift
As meditation, or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

GHOST. I find thee apt;
And duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

Would'st thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out, that, sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life,
Now wears his crown.

HAM. O, my prophetic soul! my uncle!

GHOST. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
(O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:
But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven;
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be:—Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body;
And, with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;

And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once despatch'd:
Cut off ev'n in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneal'd;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account,
With all my imperfections on my head:
O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught; leave her to Heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire!
Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me." [*Exit.*

Hamlet administers to Marcellus and Horatio an oath of secresy relative to what they have seen, and exclaims:—

"The time is out of joint,—O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right!"

The next scene contains a touching elegiac narrative, in which Ophelia describes to her father a meeting she has had with Hamlet, in which the latter had all the appearance of a madman:—

"No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors."

Observe how admirably this apparently useless part of Ophelia is adapted to the purpose of mingling the pathos of pity with the horror of revenge.

Ophelia's father declares to the king that Hamlet is mad, and suggests that he should convince himself of the fact by witnessing an interview between Hamlet and Ophelia. The king consents, and conceals himself. Ophelia, with a book in her hand, walks in a gallery of the palace. Hamlet there meets her, and addresses her in language which is apparently that of an insane man, but of which each strophe ends by this cruel expression:—*Get thee to a nunnery!* Five times he repeats this apparent absurdity to his weeping mistress. It is evident that under these words he covers a revengeful allusion against the semi-complicity of his mother. But Ophelia cannot understand him, and falls into despair.

Here enter upon the scene a troop of comedians who have been brought thither to calm Hamlet's mind. The drama degenerates into the comic: it contains numerous facetious allusions to a troop of child comedians who were then the rage in London, and who rivalized with the city comedians, of whom Shakspeare, author and actor, formed part. Nevertheless Hamlet himself, amidst buffooneries which are out of place,

always preserves the secret thought of his true character.

He ends by a philosophic imprecation against himself. In this we perceive how much he suffers to feel a tragic destiny imposed upon him by the necessity of avenging his father.

"HAM. (*alone*). O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working, all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive, and the cue for passion,
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant; and amaze, indeed,
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property, and most dear life,
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?

Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
Why, I should take it: for it cannot be,
But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
Why, what an ass am I? This is most brave;
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fye upon 't! foh! About my brains! Humph! I have heard,
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father,
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick; if he do blench,
I know my course. The spirit, that I have seen,
May be a devil; and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and, perhaps,

Out of my weakness, and my melancholy
(As he is very potent with such spirits),
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this: The play's the thing,
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king." [*Exit.*

THE next act exhibits to us Hamlet and the players. He begins by addressing to them some admirable and sensible advice as to the defective recitations of bad actors. This is a page which would not be out of place in Pope or in Addison, nor in the best English critics of the century which followed his own.

Then, in a low voice, he earnestly requested his confidant, Horatio, closely to watch the king whilst a play is being performed, the incidents of which are similar to those which accompanied the murder of his father.

"I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
Ev'n with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen."

THE players begin to act; he who takes the part of the murderer, whilst meditating his crime, declaims as follows:

"LUC. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

HAM. He poisons him in the garden for his estate.

THE KING (*rising in fury*). Give me some light—away!

POL. Give o'er the play. Lights, lights, lights!

HAM. What! frighted with false fire,
Why let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play:
For some must watch, while some must sleep,
Thus runs the world away.

O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HOR. Very well, my lord.

A Courtier, *to Hamlet*. The queen, your mother, in great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you. She desires to speak with you in her closet.

HAM. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother."

Here takes place a dialogue between him and the courtier, in which the questions and replies of Hamlet, though apparently nonsensical, are in reality most sarcastic and full of envenomed allusions, so that the spectator, whilst listening to nonsense, understands as menace.

THE King enters a room in the castle. He believes himself to be alone with his remorse.

SCENE X.

"THE KING. O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder!—Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens,
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this two-fold force,—
To be forestalled, ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,

To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels, make essay!
Bow, stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!—
All may be well! [*Retires, and kneels.*

Enter HAMLET.

HAM. Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't;—and so he goes to heaven:
And so am I revenged? That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and, for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And, how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven?
But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: And am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No.
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage;
Or in the incestuous pleasures of his bed;
At gaming, swearing; or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't;

Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven:
And that his soul may be as damn'd, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*

The King rises and advances.

KING. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go. [*Exit.*

SCENE XI.—*The Chamber of the Queen.*

Enter the QUEEN *and* POLONIUS.

POL. He will come straight. Look, you lay home to him;
Tell him, his pranks have been too broad to bear with:
And that your grace has screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.
Pray you, be round with him.

QUEEN. I'll warrant you;
Fear me not:—withdraw, I hear him coming.

(*Polonius hides himself.*)

Enter HAMLET.

HAM. Now, mother; what's the matter?

QUEEN. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAM. Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAM. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

QUEEN. Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAM. What's the matter now?

QUEEN. Have you forgot me?

HAM. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And,—'would it were not so!—you are my mother.

QUEEN. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAM. Come, come, and sit down; you shall not budge;
You go not, till I set you up a glass,
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

QUEEN. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

POL. (*behind*). What, ho! help!

HAM. How now! a rat? (*Draws.*)
Dead, for a ducat, dead.

(*Hamlet makes a pass through the arras.*)

POL. (*behind*). O, I am slain. (*Falls and dies.*)

QUEEN. O me, what hast thou done?

HAM. Nay, I know not:
Is it the king?

(*Lifts up the arras, and draws forth Polonius.*)

QUEEN. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

HAM. A bloody deed;—almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

QUEEN. As kill a king!

HAM. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.—
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

(*To Polonius.*)

I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune:

Thou find'st to be too busy, is some danger.—
Leave wringing of your hands: Peace; sit you down,
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not brazed it so,
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

QUEEN. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

HAM. Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oath: O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul; and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: Heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

QUEEN. Ah me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

HAM. Look here, upon this picture, and on this;
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination, and a form, indeed,

Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband.—Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love: for at your age,
The hey-dey in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
Else, could you not have motion: But, sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame,
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more:
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained spots,

As will not leave their tinct.

HAM. Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed:
Stew'd in corruption; honeying, and making love
Over the nasty stye;—

QUEEN. O, speak to me no more;
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet.

HAM. A murderer, and a villain:
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tythe
Of our precedent lord:—a vice of kings:
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule;
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

QUEEN. No more.

Enter Ghost.

HAM. A king
Of shreds and patches:—
Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious figure?

QUEEN. Alas! he's mad.

HAM. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

GHOST. Do not forget: This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look! amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul;

Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works;
Speak to her, Hamlet.

HAM. How is it with you, lady?

QUEEN. Alas, how is't with you?
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

HAM. On him! on him!—Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable.—Do not look upon me;
Lest, with this piteous action, you convert
My stern effects: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

QUEEN. To whom do you speak this?

HAM. Do you see nothing there?

QUEEN. Nothing at all; yet all, that is, I see.

HAM. Nor did you nothing hear?

QUEEN. No, nothing, but ourselves.

HAM. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived;
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

[*Exit Ghost.*

QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain:
This bodiless creation ecstasy

Is very cunning in.

HAM. Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: It is not madness
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to Heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue:
For in the fatness of these pursy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;
Yea, curb and woo, for leave to do him good.

QUEEN. O Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

HAM. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to my uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habit's devil, is angel yet in this;
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on: Refrain to-night:
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy:

For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either curb the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night;
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,
(*Pointing to Polonius.*)
I do repent: But Heaven hath pleased it so,—
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night!—
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.—
But one word more, good lady.

QUEEN. What shall I do?

HAM. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you, his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or padling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good, you let him know:
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly; and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

QUEEN. Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

HAM. I must to England; you know that?

QUEEN. Alack,
I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

HAM. There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows,—
Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd,—
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery: Let it work:
For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar: and it shall go hard,
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.—
This man shall set me packing.
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room:—
Mother, good night—Indeed, this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you:
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally: Hamlet, dragging in Polonius.*

SCENE XII.—*The state Hall of the Castle.*

Enter the KING, QUEEN, *and* LORDS.

KING. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

QUEEN. Mad as the sea, and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier: In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, *A rat! A rat!*
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man."

The king orders that Hamlet should embark for England, where the king, his ally, is to put him to death.

SCENE XIV.—*The* KING, *the* QUEEN, *and* HORATIO.

Enter OPHELIA *with dishevelled hair, singing and playing upon a lute.*

" OPH. *How should I your true love know*
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone,
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heel a stone!

KING. How do you, pretty lady?

OPH. Well, God 'ield you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table.

KING. Conceit upon her father.

OPH. Pray let us have no words of this; but when they ask what it means, say you this:

Good morrow, 'tis Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine:

Then up he rose, and don'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.

KING. Pretty Ophelia!

OPH. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on't.

By Gis, and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fye for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed:
(He answers.)
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep to think they should lay him i' the cold ground: My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night! [*Exit.*

KING. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you. [*Exit Horatio.*

O! this is the poison of deep grief; it springs

All from her father's death!

QUEEN. Alack, what noise is this!

Enter LAERTES, *son of the murdered courtier, just returned from France.*

LAERTES. O thou vile king,
Where is my father?

KING. Dead.

QUEEN. But not by him.

LAER. By whom? Fore Heaven, I'll know!

KING. Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
That, sweepstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

LAER. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

KING. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment 'pear,
As day does to your eye.

Enter OPHELIA, *fantastically dressed with straws and flowers.*

LAER. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—
O Heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love: and, where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

OPH. *They bore him barefaced on the bier;*
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny:
And in his grave rain'd many a tear;—
Fare you well, my dove!

LAER. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

OPH. You must sing, *Down a-down, an you call him a-down-a.* O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

LAER. This nothing's more than matter.

OPH. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

LAER. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

OPH. There's fennel for you, and columbines:—there's rue for you; and here's some for me:—we may call it, herb of grace o' Sundays:—you may wear your rue with a difference.—There's a daisy:—

I would give you some violets; but they withered all, when my father died:—They say, he made a good end,—

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy,— (*Sings.*)

LAER. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

OPH. *And will he not come again?* (*Sings.*)
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God 'a mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls! I pray God. God be wi' you! [*Exit Ophelia.*

LAER. Do you see this, O God?

KING. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but, if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul,
To give it due content.

LAER. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure funeral,—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment, o'er his bones,
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.
KING. So you shall:
And, where the offence is, let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me." [*Exeunt.*

IN the mean while, the perfidy of the king has been providentially frustrated. The prince, stopped by pirates at sea, discovers that he has been sent to England in order that he may be put to death. He causes to be sent thither in his place the two courtiers intrusted with the murderous missive. There they perish instead of himself. He returns to Denmark, conceals himself at the gates of the capital, and secretly informs Horatio of his presence. The latter acquaints the queen, and prepares her to betray her second husband, as she already had the first, with a versatility worthy of so fickle a nature.

THE king converses with Laertes, and feigns to confide in him, with the purpose of ridding himself of Hamlet.

Here we are evidently hastening to the *dénouement.*

Laertes pretends to share the hatred of the king for Hamlet. The king urges him to measure himself against the latter in a bout with fencing foils.

"KING. Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come
home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together,
And wager o'er your heads: he, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and, in a pass of practice,
Requite him for your father.
LAER. I will do't:
And, for the purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion; that if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.
KING. Let's further think of this;
Weigh, what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd; therefore this project
Should have a back, or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof. Soft;—let me see:—
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,—
I ha't:
When in your motion you are hot and dry

(As make your bouts more violent to that end),
And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd him
A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose, may hold there. But stay, what noise?

Enter QUEEN.

How now, sweet queen?

QUEEN. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow:—Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAER. Drown'd! O, where?

QUEEN. There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook,
That shews his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them;
There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up:
Which time, she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

LAER. Alas, then, she is drown'd?

QUEEN. Drown'd, drown'd.

LAER. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears: But yet
It is our trick: nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord!
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it. [*Exit.*

KING. Let's follow, Gertrude;
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I, this will give it start again;
Therefore, let's follow." [*Exeunt.*

Here follows the beautiful scene of the grave-diggers, which has always met with the admiration of the English public, and which, in the depth and rude cynicalness of the dialogue between the two clowns, digging and amusing themselves with the skulls of their friends, corresponds with the philosophic character of the people. They begin with a dissertation upon the propriety or impropriety of interring Ophelia (presumed to have committed suicide) in holy ground; and the dialogue ends by one of them sending the other for a stoup of beer.

Hamlet comes up, accompanied by Horatio, and converses with the grave-digger. The dialogue is curious; it indicates madness on the one hand, rusticity on the other.

"Whose skull was this?" inquires Hamlet.

"CLO. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

HAM. This? (*Takes the skull.*)

CLO. E'en that.

HAM. Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times! and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips, that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch think, to this favour she must come: make her laugh at that. — Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HOR. What's that, my lord?

HAM. Dost thou think, Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

HOR. E'en so.

HAM. And smelt so? pah! (*Throws down the skull.*)

HOR. E'en so, my lord.

HAM. To what base uses we may return, Horatio? Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

HOR. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

HAM. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: As thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust: the dust is earth; of earth we make loam: And why of that loam, whereto

he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?
Imperious Cæsar, dead, and turn'd to clay;
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that the earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!
But soft! but soft! aside:—Here comes the king,

Enter Priests, &c. in procession; the corpse of Ophelia; LAERTES, *and Mourners, following;* KING, QUEEN, *their Trains, &c.*

The queen, the courtiers: Who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites! This doth betoken,
The corse, they follow, did with desperate hand
Foredo its own life. 'Twas of some estate:
Couch we a while, and mark. (*Retiring with Horatio.*)

LAER. What ceremony else?

HAM. That is Laertes,
A very noble youth: Mark.

LAER. What ceremony else?

1 PRIEST. Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty: Her death was doubtful:
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her;
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

LAER. Must there be no more done?

1 PRIEST. No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead,

To sing a *requiem*, and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

LAER. Lay her i' the earth;—
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh,
May violets spring!—I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

HAM. What, the fair Ophelia!

QUEEN. Sweets to the sweet: Farewell!
(*Scattering flowers.*)
I hoped, thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought, thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

LAER. O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of!—Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:
(*Leaps into the grave.*)
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead;
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

HAM. (*advancing*). What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,
Hamlet the Dane. (*Leaps into the grave.*)

LAER. The devil take thy soul!
(*Grappling with him.*)

HAM. Thou pray'st not well.

I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For though I am not splenetive and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear: Hold off thy hand.

KING. Pluck them asunder.

QUEEN. Hamlet, Hamlet!

ALL. Gentlemen,—

HOR. Good my lord, be quiet.

(*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*)

HAM. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

QUEEN. O my son! what theme?

HAM. I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

KING. O, he is mad, Laertes.

QUEEN. For love of God, forbear him.

HAM. 'Zounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woul't weep? woul't fight? woul't fast? woul't tear thyself?
Woul't drink up Esil? eat a crocodile?
I'll do't.—Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us; till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.

QUEEN. This is mere madness:

And thus a while the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.
HAM. Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever: But it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [*Exit.*
KING. I pray thee, good Horatio, wait upon him.—
[*Exit Horatio.*
Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
(*To Laertes.*)
We'll put the matter to the present push.—
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.—
This grave shall have a living monument:
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be." [*Exeunt.*

A COURTIER comes to inform Hamlet that the king laid a wager that he will beat Laertes in the duel with fencing-foils, and that the court will assemble to act as judges.

Hamlet acknowledges to Horatio that he feels himself oppressed with gloomy forebodings.

"In that case, decline the challenge," urges Horatio.

"HAM. Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now.

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, *Lords,* OSRIC, *and attendants, with foils, &c.*

KING. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

(*The king puts the hand of Laertes into that of Hamlet.*)

HAM. Give me your pardon, sir: I have done you wrong;
But pardon it, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,
How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.
What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception,
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never, Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it then? His madness: If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

LAER. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but, in my terms of honour,
I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,

Till by some elder masters, of known honour,
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungored; but till that time,
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.

HAM. I embrace it freely;
And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils; come on.

LAER. Come, one for me.

HAM. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

LAER. You mock me, sir.

HAM. No, by this hand.

KING. Give them the foils, young Osric.—Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

HAM. Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

KING. I do not fear it: I have seen you both:
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

LAER. This is too heavy, let me see another.

HAM. This likes me well: These foils have all a length? (*They prepare to play.*)

OSR. Ay, my good lord.

KING. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table:—
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlement their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,

Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn: Give me the cups:
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet.—Come, begin;—
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

HAM. Come on, sir. (*They play.*)

LAER. Come, my lord.

HAM. One.

LAER. No.

HAM. Judgment.

OSR. A hit, a very palpable hit.

LAER. Well,—again.

KING. Stay, give me drink: Hamlet, this pearl is thine;
Here's to thy health.—Give him the cup.

(*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within.*)

HAM. I'll play this bout first, set it by awhile.
Come.—Another hit: What say you? (*They play.*)

LAER. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

KING. Our son shall win.

QUEEN. He's fat, and scant of breath.—
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

HAM. Good madam,—

KING. Gertrude, do not drink.

QUEEN. I will, my lord;—I pray you, pardon me.

KING. It is the poison'd cup; it is too late. (*Aside.*)

HAM. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

QUEEN. Come, let me wipe thy face.

LAER. My lord, I'll hit him now.
KING. I do not think it.
LAER. And yet it is almost against my conscience. (*Aside.*)
HAM. Come, for the third, Laertes: You do but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard, you make a wanton of me.
LAER. Say you so? come on. (*They play.*)
OSR. Nothing neither way.
LAER. Have at you now.
(*Laertes wounds Hamlet: then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*)
KING. Part them, they are incensed.
HAM. Nay, come again. (*The queen falls.*)
OSR. Look to the queen there, ho!
HOR. They bleed on both sides:—How is it, my lord?
OSR. How is't, Laertes?
LAER. Why, as a woodcock to my own springe, Osric:
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.
HAM. How does the queen?
KING. She swoons to see them bleed.
QUEEN. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet!—
The drink, the drink,—I am poison'd! (*Dies.*)
HAM. O villainy!—Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! seek it out. (*Laertes falls.*)
LAER. It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour's life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated, and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd;
I can no more; the king, the king's to blame.

HAM. The point
Envenom'd too!—Then, venom, to thy work.
(*Stabs the King.*)

OSR. & LORDS. Treason! treason!

KING. O, yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

HAM. Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion:—Is the union here?
Follow my mother. (*King dies.*)

LAER. He is justly served;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.—
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee;
Nor thine on me! (*Dies.*)

HAM. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio:—Wretched queen, adieu:—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest), O, I could tell you,—
But let it be:—Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HOR. Never believe it;

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAM. As thou'rt a man,—
Give me the cup; let go; by Heaven I'll have it.—
O God!—Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me?
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.—(*March afar off, and shot within.*)
What warlike noise is this?

OSR. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

HAM. O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit;
I cannot live to hear the news from England:
But I do prophesy, the election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more or less,
Which have solicited,—the rest is silence. (*Dies.*)

HOR. Now cracks a noble heart;—Good night, sweet prince:
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
Why does the drum come hither? (*March within.*)

Enter FORTINBRAS, *the English Ambassadors, and others.*

FORT. Where is this sight?

HOR. What is it you would see?
If aught of woe, or wonder, cease your search.

FORT. This quarry cries on havock!—O proud death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?
1 AMB. The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late;
The ears are senseless, that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?
HOR. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you:
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived; give order, that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak, to the yet unknowing world,
How these things came about."

Such is Shakspeare's tragedy of Hamlet, which, when his age was but 22, established his reputation.

The germ is there of every characteristic of his prodigious genius, and we need not be surprised at the immense favour with which this drama was received by the English public.

In the first place, although a very great poet, Marlowe, had imitated the German legend of Faust, which has since, in our days, been revived and completed by Goethe, an English tragedy of immense beauty, *Hamlet*, was as new upon the stage in the

city of London as were the traditions of the extreme north of Europe.

Secondly, the drama of Hamlet, although, as we have seen, the French legend of Belleforest had supplied Shakspeare with the first idea, was entirely invented by the English author. Three great conceptions, most profound ones for so young a man, constituted its basis:

A king secretly guilty, guilty in love, guilty in ambition, and brooding upon his throne and upon his couch, with poignant remorse, over his double crime, —discovered at length by an insane son-in-law.

The weakness of a woman, of a queen, who gives her love to the murderer of her first husband, without positively knowing, and without wishing to examine, whether her second marriage be innocent or culpable; whose conscience is awakened only through the natural love of a mother for her son, and who makes up her mind only when dying to tear down the transparent veil which still conceals from her the crime in which she almost innocently participates. A complex, dramatic, doubly-interesting position, which during the whole play leaves the mind of the spectator fluctuating between horror and pity, without ever resting in complete aversion or compassion.

Lastly, the feigned madness of Hamlet, a prince caressed by the assassin of his father, suspecting the crime which has deprived him of the latter, but unwilling to avow his suspicion for fear of sharing the same fate; eventually informed of all by the avenging apparition, confiding his secret only to a few sure

friends, and continuing to feign madness to others, returning upon his steps as a vengeance of heaven to undergo the double fatality of his destiny, as murderer of the king and as his victim!

Certes, we have here a tragedy which in itself is tragic, and which would not need a poet to write it; it would suffice that a poet should have conceived it!

But here it is the same poet who conceived and who wrote the play—we may add, and who acted it; for all the biographers of the period agree in stating that although Shakspeare was but an indifferent actor, yet he was never equalled in the part of the ghost in Hamlet.

And see what surprising boldness there is in making this supernatural apparition, this revealing ghost, a capital and essential character in the play! Who would ever have been able to discover that fatal secret? The appearance of a ghost was moreover in perfect harmony with the ideas and even with the beliefs of the period. It was an element of the marvellous, both upon the stage and in religious faith; so firmly were the spectators convinced beforehand of the almost daily relations between the two worlds, the visible and the invisible.

And thus, observe with what unfailing confidence and sovereign skill the poet, himself credulous, places the apparition at the very threshold of his drama, and with what daring he at once makes the tie which shall bind the spectator until the last scene of his drama.

It is the stroke of genius; it is by this that at the first step one recognizes the inventor.

With the exception of two or three episodic scenes in which the poet, to amuse his public and to rail at the child-actors who then engrossed the attention of London, everything moves without deviation towards the final catastrophe; everywhere we see the queen wavering between innocence and the criminality of her second husband, between maternal love for Hamlet and pity for this unhappy child; between the threats and the tenderness of her son; between the love and the hatred of the king. Everywhere we see the aversion of the king against the son of the queen, his desire to rid himself of him, his wish to win him over, and the impossibility of instilling into him sentiments in accordance with his interests; lastly, we ever see Hamlet, half informed by the ghost, seeking for the whole truth, finding it in the agitation of the king when the players act his own crime before his face, and resolving, though regretfully, to avenge his father, whilst leading his wretched mother into a second act of treachery, up to the time when all the threads of this quadruple conspiration become commingled and entangled in a scene where space and light are wanting. Conspiration of the king with Laertes to slay Hamlet; conspiration of Laertes to avenge the unintentional murder of his father by Hamlet; conspiration of Hamlet with Horatio to kill the king; and, lastly, conspiration of the queen against her guilty

husband, and against herself, in drinking the poison prepared by her husband for her son; a scene of general murder where every one dies, and needs to die in order to escape from this terrible position!

But observe how much the poet is a poet, and how he mingles the touching with the horrible in this chaos of crimes, which would be but an ignoble butchery if the heavenly face of a young girl, punished for her innocence and her love, did not come, like a moonbeam upon a charnel-house, to shed its soft light over this mass of horrors. We refer to Ophelia, to that charming child, the sister of Laertes, who suspects that Hamlet's madness is not incurable, perhaps even not real, who loves him at all risks, whether insane or rational, who still hopes to restore to him his reason, and who, when ultimately this hope fails her, loses her own, falls into the most touching form of madness, and dies, slowly sinking beneath the waters of the stream, under the willow-branches. The half-sensible, half-crazy romances that she sighs forth when near to her death, wring involuntary tears from the whole auditory. In them we feel, not the harrowing accent of despair, but an after-taste of her deceived hopes, and her grief when she finds that her lover has slain, behind the tapestry, her virtuous father, and that, even were Hamlet to recover his reason, she could never be his.

Let us observe also how instinctively profound is this young poet of twenty in his study of madness,

and how true a conception he has of its language, when he puts into the mouth of Ophelia gay and even erotic notes, mingled with some plaintive ones which go to the heart we know not why; the sublime inconsistency of a reason that has been wrecked, and which by chance again finds its grief upon the path of wandering memory.

Lastly, who but a great poet could soften down this terrible picture by spreading over it those tints of love and woe, commencing in simplicity, continuing in tenderness, and ending in the most touching suicide?

In regard to the scene of the clowns digging the grave of Ophelia, with that indifference of custom that plays with the mounting when the pearl is broken and lost, one may say that the scene is too strongly drawn for the Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, or French stage; but in the case of the English stage it is marvellously adapted to the pensive and philosophic genius of this people. It is Bossuet exhibiting the profoundest contempt for human vanities; it is Pascal uttering the last cry upon human misery; the derision of death and of despair, the mockery of one's self held up as a spectacle to man who to-day triumphs and to-morrow shall be a relic of his own nothingness! One cannot go further into emptiness. To search the earth, even into the recesses of the grave-yard, for the rottenness of the corpse which was yesterday a great man; to utter the cruel but truthful dictum upon what

has no longer a name in any language; to place this expression not in the mouth of a priest or a philosopher, but upon the untutored and gross lips of a labourer; to derive philosophy from the cry of nature or from the burst of laughter of indifference: this, and especially at the age of twenty, is a sovereign indication of genius!

It was Shakspeare's first appearance.

And the famous poetical and lyrical contemplation of this great man in the same play: *To be or not to be, that is the question!* Who ever rose so high and descended so deeply in human thought? Has not this contemplation remained proverbial with every people? Has not Shakspeare in this expressed the sentiment of the whole human race? What more can a supreme poet do?

CERTAINLY neither Æschylus, nor Corneille, nor Racine, would have written *Hamlet* upon the same type as the son of the working-man of Stratford-upon-the-Avon. In the first-named one finds in plot and in expression a refinement of art that defies criticism, produced before an assembly of the *élite* of nations, to leave in the imagination of men immortal models of the beauty of language. It is the beautiful! it is the South of Europe.

In the second one finds the rapid and fiery improvisation of the man of the North, who ignores these melodious refinements of Greece and of France, and who seeks at random in the legends of the frozen

ocean, or in Italian novels of the middle ages, terrible or touching subjects for dramas to please a people still in its infancy. Certainly in the English author the degree of perfection is less in the aggregate; but in his drama emotion is at times raised to a higher pitch. There is a great distance between the *Athalie* of Racine and the *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, or *Macbeth* of Shakspeare; there is the difference between sovereign perfection and accidental *verve*. It is less beautiful, but it is more powerful, and above all it is more true.

Verve, that mysterious word which signifies genius at liberty, is the characteristic of Shakspeare. You feel it everywhere, it dazzles you, it carries you away, it wrests from you sometimes those utterances of enthusiasm which become perpetuated from generation to generation among the people that witnesses these prodigies; sometimes that laughter which proceeds from nature's self, which blends several impressions at once in the human soul, at the risk of weakening the tragic impression by the contrast of laughter and tears; sometimes those philosophic meditations which raise the spectator from the special emotion of the play to that general, impersonal, transcendent emotion which makes of him an impartial witness of crime and of virtue upon the scene of the world. Which is the finest of these two arts? Answer if you can; for my part, I cannot venture to do so. If I be asked: in which find you the greater art, in Racine or in Shakspeare? I would answer: most certainly in Racine. Racine knows how to choose. Shakspeare does not.

But in which find you the greater degree of nature? I would unhesitatingly answer: in Shakspeare.

Thus we should not compare but admire each thing separately.

The Greeks were right in placing above every one Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides.

The French are right to place no one above Corneille and Racine.

The English are right in preferring Shakspeare to all who, before and after him, have conceived and written modern drama.

This independent people was born to admire Shakspeare.

This independent poet (independent perhaps through ignorance) was born to charm this people.

All are right; but in order to recognize this fact one must take a standing higher than the classical or romantic schools, and place one's self at the various points of view of highly civilized nations and of those which have newly sprung into existence; of antique genius and of modern genius.

One must also take into consideration, not only the question of perfection, but also of abundance on the part of the dramatic author.

And from this point of view the superiority of the English poet is indisputable. Exactness, abundance, universality, are the three characteristics of this great man!

These two forms of genius, tragic genius and comic genius, were never, before Shakspeare's time, combined in the same man. Neither Æschylus, nor

Sophocles, nor Euripides, in Grecian antiquity, nor Corneille, nor Racine, in French literature, were gifted by nature with that double faculty which in the tragic poet plunges into the abyss of human woe to wrest from the human heart the last utterances of despair, and which, at the same time, observes with sarcastic attention the phenomena of ridicule, in order to draw from the spectator of the human mind the merry or mocking laugh. "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step," said at Warsaw, scoffing at his own disaster, the most memorable actor of the drama in action of our great wars. That was untrue, or, at least, was true only in the eyes of philosophy or of history. But in those who hold up the world as a spectacle to itself these two faculties generally exclude each other. The mind which contemplates great catastrophes, and which finds in such contemplation blood and tears, is precisely the opposite to the analytical mind which seizes upon the secrets of what is comic in human character, and produces from them comedy, man held up to derision by man. Shakspeare alone, with his prodigious aptitude for observing and representing everything, was able with the same hand to produce such a type as Hamlet and the equally immortal, one of Falstaff, that braggart who, in the shameful versatility of his character, pretends to qualities which, at the same time, his every action disclaims. No comedy, either ancient or modern, without even making an exception in favour of Molière, the most perfect though not the greatest artist in our literature, has created and placed in action a person-

age so profoundly comic as Falstaff. Had Shakspeare invented but this *chef-d'œuvre*, he would compete with Molière and would not be inferior to him. But the man who conceived the feigned insanity of Hamlet, the real and mortal madness of Ophelia, the passion of Romeo and Juliet, finding a refuge only in the tomb of one of them, and who wrote also the grotesque eccentricities of Falstaff, and the thousand fantastic characteristics of Caliban and of Cymbeline, in his gay, varied, and poetic fairy scenes, such as those of *The merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Tempest*, *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, this man, as a poet, that is to say, as an inventor, had received from heaven at his birth all the keys of the human heart. He moulded it at his pleasure with laughter or with tears. One cannot witness without amazement the prodigious work of his composition; and it was not in his case indifference, it was the same love equally fruitful in everything that constitutes a characteristic of man, the sublime or the ridiculous, equally human; the omnipotence of genius embracing mankind in its entirety, and which, playing upon it as on different instruments, rises afterwards to a marvellous philosophy which makes him the equal of Pascal after having made him the equal of Molière.

In considering Shakspeare under this aspect, it is impossible to accuse the English of national prejudice, or not to admit that in him the providence of nations made them the highest present it can offer to human communities: a poet to render their nation illustrious.

And wherefore has this great man thus taken possession of the whole of this nation? It is that he was not merely a writer of plays, but at the same time a sovereign philosopher and a sovereign poet.

See for instance his works of simple poetry, such as his sonnets, worthy of Petrarch, and his poems, which would have equalled him to Tasso if adverse fortune had left him leisure to write in rhymed verse, instead of forcing him to write in prose or in blank verse, with the haste which the public required of his genius.

Add to this incessant labour the tardy studies which he was obliged to enter upon in order to find, either in Plutarch, that living epitome of ancient history, or in the history of England, which he revived again for the people, or lastly in the Italian legends of his times, such subjects for dramas or for tragedies as would interest his public, without counting the tragi-comedies, the fairy-pieces, the innumerable creations of his imagination, such as *Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Hamlet, Othello, Julius Cæsar, Cleopatra, The Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, Cymbeline, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The whole tragic history of England,* &c. Each of these pieces, whether serious or light, would deserve at our hands an analysis, which would reveal to us ineffable beauties, if the brief nature of the present work did not constrain us merely to mention them. To name them is to call to mind so many master-works, which made the

compositions of this sublime mind the library of a whole nation.

LET us return to his life; it was a full and brief one; it did not obtain from heaven the long years that were granted to Sophocles with the greatness of genius that could not die.

"The poet," says M. Villemain, a worthy appreciator of great men,—"the poet, as age grew upon him, as he descended into that vale of years of which Othello speaks, did not, amidst the bustle of London, forget his native town, nor the young family which he had so often left.

"Every year, it is stated, and this is one of the rare details given by his contemporaries relative to his life, he went during the summer to spend some of his time at Stratford, with his wife, his children, and his aged father. One of his brothers, whom his example had doubtless led towards the stage, had followed him to London; this brother is now known only by the words: *Edmond Shakspeare, comedian,* inscribed in the register of deaths of St Saviour's Church, in the parish of Southwark, where Shakspeare lodged.

"The poet's taste for the beauties of nature, his vivid impression of the green landscapes of England, would alone indicate that he was in the habit of seeking rural repose. In his own time, however, another motive was attributed for these frequent voyages; it has been stated that, upon the road to his native place, he was fond of stopping at the *Crown* in Oxford, the hostess of which, remarkable for her elegance and

beauty, became the mother of the poet Davenant. Shakspeare, who was an intimate guest, was godfather to this child, who was said to belong to him by a closer tie, and who subsequently took a singular pride in boasting of this descent. We are better able to understand, after this, the zeal of the royalist Davenant on behalf of the republican Milton: it was doubtless in his eyes a double debt of poetic parentage.

"However this may be, it appears that more serious purposes led Shakspeare to Warwickshire, and that, in spite of the distractions of an actor's life, he was early seized with that *home sickness* which, at the age of 50, caused him to quit London in order to rejoin his family at his native place. We find him in 1597 acquiring at Stratford a large house which he caused to be partly rebuilt, naming it *New-Place*. In 1602 he purchased 107 acres of ground adjoining his house. At a later period he purchased, for a somewhat heavy sum, the lease of one half the tithes of the parish of Stratford. He possessed moreover several small estates, orchards and gardens, not only at Stratford, but at Bushaxton and Welcombe, villages in Warwickshire. According to all appearance, he had thus carried with him to his native place the produce of his theatrical success, and the bounty he had received from a few nobles of the court, and especially from Lord Southampton."

"At 35 I still loved!" said Montesquieu. "Shakspeare loved later in life: and in his sonnets, which are upon the whole the only memoirs of his life, he complains of growing old whilst allowing himself to be deceived,

"'Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue;
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress't.'

"When, however, he reached the age of fifty, the poet, with all his genius unimpaired, bid adieu to those beauties who concealed from him his age; and, giving up the management of his theatre, started for Stratford, whither he had, a few years previously, gone for the purpose of marrying his daughter Susan, and where he had planted, in the garden of *New-Place*, a mulberry-tree, which was long a celebrity. In all probability it was in the year 1614 that Shakspeare thus left London altogether; for, from that period, he was no longer designated as the proprietor of the *Globe;* and, in that very year, Fletcher produced at this theatre his comedy of *The Scornful Lady*, in which the soliloquy of Hamlet and the last words of Ophelia are malevolently parodied.

"Shakspeare, when he had returned to his native town, to his wife, whom he had so long and so often left, and to his two daughters, seemed destined to the enjoyment of repose in a condition of happy competency: but this repose was brief; and still fewer records of it have been left than of the other periods of the poet's life. He was, it is merely said, well received by the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, occasionally frequented the tavern at Stratford, and wrote an epigram upon one of his neighbours, a rich old gentleman, a great friend of his, but somewhat addicted to usury. We find, moreover, from the public records

of the period, that he was engaged in a law-suit with the parish upon a question relating to the enclosure of some land, and that in 1616 he married his second daughter Judith, who was then more than 30 years of age. In the same year, on the 23rd April, the anniversary of his birth, Shakspeare died, after completing his 52nd year. On this same day, the 23rd April, 1616, expired another inventive moralist, Cervantes, old and poor, and when near his last hour imploring for his family, in a letter he did not live to complete, the alms of his protector, the Count of Lemos.

"Shakspeare, although death appears to have taken him unawares, left a will written with his own hand, 'in perfect health of body and of mind,' as he says at the commencement of this document, which is dated 25th March, 1616. In this will he declares in the first place that, in the hope and belief of participating in eternal life, through the sole merits of Jesus Christ his Saviour, he confides his soul into the hands of God his Creator, and his body to the earth of which it is formed; then like a good English gentleman, he disposes of his property, which for that period was somewhat considerable. After having completed the marriage-portion of his daughter Judith, made several legacies of money and of furniture to his sister Jane, to his sister's children and to a few friends, and given ten pounds sterling to the poor of Stratford, he bequeathed the greater portions of his goods, his house, and all his lands, to his eldest daughter Susan, and the reversion to the eldest son of Susan, then to the male heirs of this son; then, in default of these, to the

second male child of Susan, renewing this conditional bequest as many as seven times; and, in default of any male heir, bequeathing the said property to his niece Hall, to the son of this niece, and lastly to his second daughter Judith. Two bequests are further to be remarked in this document; one is a remembrance on the part of Shakspeare of his old profession of actor, the other of his wife:

"'I give and I bequeath,' says he, 'to my comrades John Heminge, Richard Burbage, and Henry Condell, thirty-six shillings to purchase them rings;' and lower down, 'I bequeath to my wife my best coloured bed, with the trimmings.'

"Lastly, Shakspeare names as executors his son-in-law John Hall and his daughter Susan. Hall, to whom Shakspeare had married his favourite daughter, was a physician, who afterwards became of some celebrity, and who published a kind of clinical compendium long held in estimation, where, amongst a *thousand cases* enumerated and described by him, one case alone, the disease of his father-in-law Shakspeare, of which he unfortunately does not speak, would be in our days sought. But often the man of genius is unrecognized by those around him; and often too a man who writes little suspects upon what points posterity will be most curious.

"Milton, some years afterwards, wrote him this immortal epitaph:

"'What needs my Shakspeare, for his honour'd bones,
The labour of an age in piled stones;
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid

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